

THE
KNIGHTS OF THE SWAN;
OR,
THE COURT OF CHARLEMAGNE:
AN HISTORICAL AND MORAL TALE.

TO SERVE AS A CONTINUATION TO
THE TALES OF THE CASTLE;

And of which all the Incidents that bear Analogy to the French Revolution are taken from History.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH OF
MADAME DE GENLIS,

AUTHOR OF THE
THEATRE OF EDUCATION, ADELAIDE AND THEODORE, &c.

BY THE REV. MR. BERESFORD.

An age of pain does not atone for a moment of guilt.
TH. CORNEILLE.

If that adversity which arises from loss of fortune fix our attachment stronger towards the friend who suffers, and force us to new efforts to assist him; the loss of innocence, when it happens from no habitual depravity, forms a much stronger motive to exertion, when those who have fallen struggle to raise themselves up.

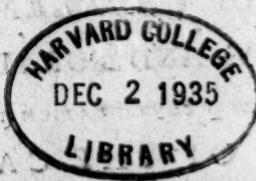
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THE

KNIGHTS OF THE SWAN, &c.

CHAPTER I.

THE ORIGIN OF THE ORGAN.

The imprison'd winds, releas'd, with joyful sound,
Proclaim their liberty around.

ANON.

Il n'est ame si revêche qui ne se sente touchée de quelque révérence, à considérer cette vastité sombre de nos églises et ouir le son dévoieux de nos orgues.

MONTAGNE.

OLIVER, who had been less absorbed in grief since the adventure of Ordalia, took a more active part than usual in the conversation; the interesting appearance of Giaffar, and his deep melancholy, had disposed his heart in his favour, ever since their first meeting; and the singularity of his device * excited his curiosity. He spoke to him of the vow he had made, to be always travelling (1), and he expressed a desire to know the motive of it. Giaffar replied, that he could refuse nothing to friends who were so dear to him; that, as a sacred duty obliged him to conceal his misfortunes, he requested their promise never to reveal the secrets he was going to deposit in their breasts.—The two friends made the vow he re-

* A foreign plant upon the summit of a mountain; and these words, *To find her, or die,* as has been already mentioned.

quired ; and Giaffar began his astonishing history in this manner :

" I am thirty-six years old, and my career is already finished ! I have run it with eclat, perhaps with glory. Fortune and love strewed my path with flowers, until I arrived at the very verge of the gulph which was to swallow me up.—I have lost every thing, even my very name ; the East still blesses it ; the love of a grateful people cherishes its memory ; and yet I cannot own it ! Condemned to obscurity, my fame is become a stranger to me ; I cannot enjoy it ; and, being dead to the universe, I receive, as it were in the silence of the grave, the approbation and eulogium of my contemporaries ! In a word, you see an unfortunate victim of despotism, and a melancholy example of the vicissitudes of human life—I am Barmecide (2)." At this name, a name so great and renowned, the Knights of the Swan arose from their seats.—A deep sentiment of admiration and respect rendered them motionless for some minutes. In generous minds, proscription and misfortune increase the interest which talents and virtue create ! The two friends looked at Barmecide with eager curiosity, as if it were the first time they had seen him. The emotion and surprise they experienced were expressed on their countenances in so moving a manner, that Barmecide was greatly affected at it :—" O ! my friends," cried he, " you restore me to existence again !" —On saying this, he rushed into their arms ; and, after having received their tender embrace, he thus resumed his narrative :

" My father, who was born in the dominions of Gerold, had a strong passion for travelling. He communicated this turn to my mother, who was always his inseparable companion. I was born in Persia ; my father was my sole preceptor, and instructed me from facts and observations founded upon experience, and not by taking his lessons from books ; he made me study

study nature in the countries and deserts through which we were incessantly passing ; and he taught me to know mankind, by judging of them in a mass, from their laws and social institutions. As soon as we arrived in a new region, my father informed himself, with care, of the nature of the government, and its general and particular laws : this knowledge being once acquired, he had an exact insight into the morals, the virtues and vices of the nation ; he imparted to me his conjectures ; and the examination we made afterwards, as we studied the inhabitants, always confirmed his first judgment. I had the misfortune to lose this excellent father at the age of twenty ; my mother had long been dead ; I had three brothers ; we had always lived together in the greatest harmony, we were averse to separate, and it was determined among us, that we should continue our travels for two years longer, and then return to our father's country. We had frequently heard of the magnificence of Aaron Raschid's court ; and curiosity led us to Bagdat. Being arrived in that superb city, we made acquaintance with some Europeans of our own age ; and we all lived together in the same house. My brothers possessed many agreeable talents, and played upon several instruments ; some of our companions had the same taste ; and, as we could not enjoy at Bagdat the free exercise of our religion, we agreed to meet together in a room upon every festival, to chant divine service. Some chanted the psalms, others played on various instruments, and the whole formed a very loud concert. The room lay towards the street, the people stopped as they went by to hear us ; the tendency of these proceedings was quickly discovered ; Mahometan intolerance took the alarm ; and an edict was obtained from the caliph, which was published throughout the city, and which forbade all Christians, under pain of death, to assemble for the purpose of chanting their prayers ; leaving, however,

however, to every one the liberty of reciting them in music, if the chant made part of their religious rites ; but allowing such permission individually only, prescribing, without exception, every meeting, were it composed of but two or three persons. This prohibition disgusted me to such a degree, that my whole thoughts were employed upon the means of eluding it. I had a strong mechanical turn ; and, after some reflection, I conceived the idea of contriving an instrument, which would imitate those already known, and even the human voice. At the same time, I wanted it to produce a sound that resembled a concert of various tones. I applied myself night and day, and, in less than six months, formed an instrument of enormous bulk, which I named an organ, and which perfectly answered my intention. I then placed it near my window, and regularly played upon it, morning and evening, while I chanted the psalms for the day. The caliph was soon informed, that, notwithstanding the rigour of his prohibition, the Christians again performed their religious concerts, and with more clamour than ever. The caliph issued orders in consequence ; and one morning, as I was playing on my organ at my usual hour, a loud knocking was heard at the door. I shut the organ, and arose and opened the door ; a band of armed men, sent by the caliph, entered my chamber, and testified the greatest marks of astonishment at finding me alone. The chief of the band asked me, what was become of my accomplices. I replied, I had none. He paid no regard to this reply, and made unavailing search after the other musicians, in every room in the house ; he passed by the organ many times, without having the smallest idea that it was an instrument of music ; for I had constructed it in the form of a bureau. At last, not being able to comprehend how my companions could have made their escape, he ordered me to accompany him ; I asked to be brought into

into the presence of the caliph ; he replied, he would conduct me thither. The prince was desirous to examine me himself. He received me with a severe and gloomy air, and surveyed me for some time in silence ; and, being struck with the serenity of my countenance, ‘ Young madman,’ said he, ‘ what could have inspired you with such boldness and such contempt of life ? ’ — ‘ Seignior,’ replied I, ‘ nothing encourages innocence so much as the aspect of an equitable judge.’ — ‘ But,’ returned he, ‘ thou canst not deny thy disobedience ; I myself have been under thy window ; I myself heard the noise of instruments and voices ; and yet thou wert found alone in thy chamber. What became of thy companions ? ’ — ‘ I had none.’ — ‘ Hear me : thy appearance pleases and interests me, and thy youth excites my compassion. I can pardon thee ; but I insist upon a frank confession.’ — ‘ No, Seignior, you would surely not pardon one who could be base enough to inform against his friends.’ — ‘ Well,’ cried the caliph with anger, ‘ every Christian in Bagdat shall this day be thrown into prison.’ — ‘ They will remain there at most but a few hours,’ replied I, with the utmost tranquillity. — ‘ And who will deliver them ? ’ — ‘ Myself, Seignior.’ — At this reply the caliph was mute with astonishment, not knowing whether he should pronounce sentence against me, or dismiss me as a man out of his senses. I resumed, however, my discourse : ‘ Seignior,’ said I, ‘ I can venture to protest to you, that I have not disobeyed your orders ; that I was alone ; and this I can easily demonstrate, if you will deign to send for the bureau which is in my chamber. Before you, will I open this mysterious piece of furniture ; and you will find therein positive proof of my innocence. The caliph, whose surprise was still more increased, immediately commanded what I had solicited, to be done ; and my organ was brought into his apartment. While I was putting it in order, the caliph, who waited

waited with equal curiosity and impatience the *dénouement* of this singular scene, repaired to the princess Abassa, his sister ; he gave her an account of our interview, and returned with her in his hand. This princess, wearing a long veil, which concealed both her face and shape, sat down upon the floor, beside her brother, not far from the organ, and directly opposite to it. I then asked the caliph's permission to fit before my instrument ; and at the same moment I began to sing and play. As soon as the caliph heard the powerful and harmonious tones, which imitated in such perfection the sound of flutes, horns, hautbois, and the human voice, he arose with transport ; ‘ Is it possible,’ cried he, ‘ that this piece of furniture can be a musical instrument !—‘ Yes, Seignior,’ replied I, ‘ and I invented it to mitigate the severity of your prohibition.’—‘ In proscribing the meetings,’ said the caliph, ‘ my only aim was to repress the splendour and solemnity which your ceremonies received from the union of various voices, and different instruments of music. I had not foreseen this marvellous expedient for annulling my edict ; but it is just,’ added he, ‘ that such as are forced to obey, should have more ingenuity than those who command.’ On saying this, he turned towards Abassa, to ask her what she thought of this adventure.—I then heard the most charming and gentle voice which had ever struck my ear, request him, in terms which were highly flattering to me, to reward the inventor of so extraordinary a discovery. The caliph drew near me : ‘ Young man,’ said he, ‘ I admire talents, I am fond of the arts, and thy person pleases me ; I am desirous of having an explanation of the mechanism of this wonderful machine ; and I will take care to make your fortune : thus,’ continued he, in addressing himself to his sister, ‘ will you be satisfied, Abassa ; for I retain both the instrument and the inventor ?’—On that very day was I installed in the palace ;

palace ; a splendid suite of apartments was allotted me ; I had many slaves to attend me, and received magnificent presents. I had no fortune, and was delighted to have made one in so rapid and singular a manner ; but I was not less struck with the despotism which the prince blended even with the most distinguished of his favours ; for he had disposed of me as a slave, without consulting me, and without condescending to inquire whether any particular engagement formed any obstacle to his desire of attaching me to him. I made many reflections upon this subject, which impressed me with melancholy sensations ; but I was young, without experience, and was dazzled at the great qualities of the prince, who indeed possesses many in a very eminent degree (3). I shook off all thoughts of the terrible consequences of his despotism, and entirely gave myself up to the hopes which ambition and fortune created. On the next day, the caliph sent for me to explain the mechanism of the organ. In this demonstration, I perceived, in the course of a few minutes, that he was deficient in the knowledge which was necessary to give him an insight into the nature of complicated mechanism ; and, at the same time, that his self-love induced him to endeavour to conceal his ignorance. As he had much sense and intelligence, I should have been able, on giving him some idea of first principles, to have demonstrated what he was solicitous to know : but he would have a learned explication ; he feigned to understand, what was impossible for him to comprehend ; and my demonstration was absolutely useless to him : all he derived from it was, the secret persuasion that he had given me a high idea of his knowledge ; and I was mortified at observing how far the puerility and pride of the most enlightened man may be carried, when he has been corrupted by custom and the use of unbounded power. He disposed, however, of my organ in a manner which highly gratified

tified me. The ambassadors of Charlemagne were then at his court ; and the caliph included the instrument in the number of the presents with which he charged them for their master (4)." At this part of Barmecide's narrative, Ifambard observed it was past ten o'clock ; they agreed to meet again the next day, at the same hour, and to dedicate the whole evening to the rest of a story, which the friendship and celebrity of Barmecide rendered so interesting.

CHAPTER II.

THE FRIENDSHIP OF A DESPOT.

Toujours son amitié traîne un long esclavage.

RACINE.

ON the following evening Theobald retired at seven o'clock. The three knights repaired to Barmecide's chamber, who thus went on with his story : " My favour with the caliph increased every hour ; that prince was extremely fond of reading ; one day when he wished to read with me an excellent moral work upon the duties of man, he arose from his seat in order to shut himself up in his cabinet, ' What are you about,' Seignior ! said I, ' Ah ! rather open all the doors, an useful lecture is a benefit which a prince ought not to withhold from his subjects' (5). ' Barmecide,' replied he, ' it is dangerous to teach the multitude to reason, it will lessen their obedience.' ' Your friend, seignior,' returned I, ' your hero, Charlemagne, does not think in that manner. You know with what zeal he endeavours to propagate knowledge.' ' His magnanimity leads him astray,' said Aaron, interrupting him. ' Hear me,' continued he,

he, ' dost thou imagine it is to be wished that animals, which bend patiently to our yoke, should be endowed with understanding and intelligence ? Thinkest thou it would be advantageous to mankind that camels and elephants, whose prodigious strength is so subservient to our wants and pleasures, should be able to reflect and reason ?'—The dark depth of this discourse, which contained all the policy of despotism, chilled me with dread ; I at length learned to know in what estimation a sovereign despot holds the people he governs. This barbarous egotism excited my horrour, and I secretly determined to abandon the court of a prince I could no longer esteem, as soon as I found an occasion to escape without danger, for I had no hopes of obtaining permission to retire. Flight could alone rid me of the slavery of his favour, or the danger of his displeasure. Would to heaven I had persevered in my design ! But an attraction more powerful than ambition, soon fixed my establishment at this tempestuous court. The caliph was passionately fond of the princess his sister ; it had been his custom to pass all his time which he could spare from public affairs, in her company ; but since I had been received into such favour, his visits became less frequent, our particular interviews having engrossed the greater part of his leisure ; the severe manners of the east did not allow my admittance as a third person to their conversations. The caliph himself had been guilty of great irregularity, in having brought her into the apartment in which I was, on the day I exhibited my organ ; he imagined he could, without any serious consequence, infringe upon this sacred custom for once only, in consideration of so extraordinary a circumstance ; but nothing could have engaged him to repeat it. He complained of this to me frequently ; he lamented that he could not bring two people together whose society was so agreeable to him. This prince had too much understanding and

knowledge, not to feel the absurdity of this custom; but, like all other tyrants, he was solicitous not to make innovations, unless his passions or his interest prevailed over all political motives. He despised prejudices, yet believing them useful to his authority, he affected to respect them, and neglected nothing that tended to render them venerable in the eyes of the multitude. He was continually speaking to me of his sister; he praised her beauty, her understanding, and her sensibility of disposition. These conversations did not fail to interest me, and gratitude soon increased both the gratification and the danger of them. One day he sent for me much earlier than usual, ‘Barmecide,’ said he, ‘the vizier died suddenly last night, I have consulted Abaffa this morning upon the choice of a successor, and at the same time named such as might have pretensions to the office; she excluded them all, and told me that the friend of Aaron appeared to her the only person who ought to be nominated; thus Barmecide, it is you she has named.’ ‘I, seignior!’ cried I.—‘Yes, yourself,’ replied the caliph, ‘and I adopt her recommendation. I am aware, that your youth will make my choice appear extraordinary, but it will give the greater splendour to it; on perceiving what I have done for you, every one will give you credit for the qualifications which could justify such favour.’—‘I am not worthy of it,’ returned I, ‘no, seignior, I have neither the requisite talents nor experience.’ ‘Barmecide,’ interrupted the caliph in a commanding tone, ‘when I judge you capable, such diffidence is not allowable.’—‘But, seignior, my religion!’—‘I do not require you to abjure it; all public worship is prohibited you, and that is all I prescribe; besides, being henceforward confined to the inside of this palace, you will be less than ever exposed to the inspection of the people; all they will know of you, will be your labours, and they will not concern themselves about your belief. In a word,
I repeat

I repeat to you, that my choice and inclination will justify every thing in the eyes of the public.'

" After a conversation of this kind, it was necessary to consent to the will of a prince whose favours were as difficult to be refused, as was his vengeance to be avoided ; and thus was it, that at the age of twenty-two, I found myself prime minister of a vast empire. The caliph, who had already extended his goodness to my brothers, now loaded them with favours. He did not confer any public office upon them, but he was desirous that the brothers of the vizier should live in great opulence. They made a worthy use of their fortune, all their economy was confined to personal expenses ; their magnificence appeared only in their gifts, and their alms. I thought as they did, the treasures I possessed from the liberality of the caliph I distributed among men of letters, artists, and the unfortunate ; and, in a short time, the Barmecides became celebrated, and dear to the nation. I was soon sensible of all the weight of the burden I had taken upon me. The caliph, as is generally the case with absolute sovereigns, was neither fond of labour, nor public affairs ; he did not extend his views beyond the limits of his own reign, and ever certain of obtaining by an edict whatever money he wished for, he cared but little for the state of his finances ; I found them in wretched decay, and my principal care was to retrieve them, to ease the burden of the people, and to maintain strict justice in all the tribunals. The most happy success, and the approbation of the public, rewarded my toils. The people alone are the real dispensers of glory ; the enthusiasm of their gratitude imparts a charm which captivates and transports a generous mind. To them I affectionately attached myself, and this attachment proved the inexhaustible source of pain and unavailing regret. I could not enjoy the felicity I rendered the nation, when I considered that no inviolable law, no stable form

form of government, secured the solidity of it ; when, in fine, I considered, that either the death of Aaron, or my own, would in a moment destroy all my work. I sometimes endeavoured, but in vain, to inspire the caliph with a solicitude which appeared to me so natural ; his heart, corrupted by pride, could neither participate, nor even conceive it. One day as he appeared affected at the homage the people had paid him ; ‘ tender-hearted people,’ cried I, ‘ what would become of you if Aaron no longer existed ! ’— At these words I saw joy sparkle in the caliph’s eye. ‘ Yes, yes,’ said he, ‘ then would they feel the proper value of all I am doing for them.’—‘ But, seignior,’ returned I, ‘ if your successor should abuse the absolute power, which in your hands is so worthily employed ! —if these people, whom you love, should groan under oppression ? ’—‘ They will regret me the more keenly,’ replied the caliph. This horrid expression stopped my mouth, it destroyed the feeble hopes I had encouraged, and I murmured at fate, which chained me in the court of this inflexible despot, instead of having placed me under such a prince as Charlemagne.

“ Two years, however, elapsed, since the period in which I was invested with the office of vizier ; but unremitting toils of application, and a growing melancholy at length undermined my health, and endangered my life ; the caliph manifested on this occasion all the anxious disquietude of friendship ; this prince was fond of whatever was agreeable or necessary to him ; to contribute to his amusement, or be useful to him, were the sole means of securing his attachment ; he would then be capable of the most amiable procedure and attentions. He placed so much value upon his affection, that he thought it could alone entitle the person who was the object of it to his familiarity, and at the same time, that it ought to inspire unbounded devotedness in return ; I was but too well assured,

assured, that pride and personal interest were the first springs, and the sole basis of his conduct and sentiments ; yet his kindness for me was so constant, that it was impossible not to be affected at it ; I loved him, and not being able to deceive myself respecting what he was, I often delighted to consider what he might have been with another education, and in a different condition of life ; I then saw him the man, whom I should have chosen for my most intimate friend ; for nature had lavished upon him every thing that could interest and persuade ; he had corrupted the gifts of nature to such a degree, that with extensive knowledge, a superior understanding, and gracefulness of address, he was yet unamiable, even in the intercourse of intimacy. He referred every thing to himself, spoke only of himself ; his friend was condemned to act the eternal part of confidant and admirer ; his private conversations had never any charm for me, except when he talked of the princess, his sister, and of her he was continually speaking. I listened, for a long while, with pleasure, to the praises he gave her ; afterwards this conversation impressed me with certain painful sensations, which I was unable to define, and which at the same time became still more engaging ; I always was ready to favour its introduction, or to prolong its duration. I had been much affected at the manner in which the princess had recommended me to the office of vizier ; and I ascribed to gratitude the extreme interest she inspired me with. Since that period, the caliph frequently mentioned that she spoke of me ; she was proud, he said, of my successes and conduct. These discourses sunk deep into my memory, they were incessantly renewed ; I still recollect the sweet sound of the voice I had heard the day I was in the same apartment with her ; I considered, with pleasure, that after the caliph, I was the only man in the world she had ever beheld ; I ventured to believe she had preserved the memory of

of that incident ; the proofs of attention and esteem, which she had since given me, confirmed that idea ; in fine, I represented her to my fancy in all the charms with which the caliph had depicted her ; and Abaffa soon became the object of all my reveries. Whenever I was able to undeceive myself respecting the sensations I felt, I deplored, with bitterness, a folly of so strange a nature ; my melancholy increased by these reflections, and then it was that the decline of my health gave the caliph so much concern and pain. The physicians of the court were consulted, and they declared their opinion that my case was mortal ; however, I still continued my labours, and attended as usual, at the appointed hours, upon the caliph ; for in the commerce of princes, the best loved courtier is the most enslaved ; methodical in friendship, because they cannot feel that dear and easy independency which constitutes the charms of intimate connexion, they command their rendezvous, they have their hours of confidence and effusion of heart, as invariably fixed as their hours of audience."

When Barmecide was at this part of his narrative, a knocking was heard at the chamber door. Ifambard arose, and opening it, readily pardoned the interruption, when he saw Lancelot enter, who informed them, that having been a month at the court of Beatrice, that princess had this day charged him with an important commission for Theobald. Lancelot added, that he had arrived at the moment in which the old man was retiring to rest, and that, after having delivered his commission, knowing his friends were in the castle, he could not resist the inclination he felt to embrace them before he went away. Ifambard asked Lancelot many questions relative to the court of Beatrice. " You will find there," said Lancelot, " several French knights ; Angilbert, young Roger, Archambald, and some others ; you will likewise see Oger the Dane, who is but lately arrived."

arrived." At these words, Isambard began to laugh, on recollecting the cottage of Oger, and his story. " We have still a warrior," resumed Lancelot, " who might be named in the number of the French, on account of his attachment to Charlemagne ; it is Grimaldo, duke of Beneventum. Although the brother-in-law of Adalgise *, and a prince, yet he is grateful. Formerly a hostage at the court of France, and owing to the generosity of the emperor both his education and his dominions, he feels, as he ought, the value of such uncommon favours ; and far from uniting with the enemies of Charlemagne, he has hitherto ever fought against them (6). You will find some other princes on our side, Theudon, king of Pannonia, and the four sons of duke Aimon" (7).

After these particulars respecting the warriors, they spoke of the duchesses, and the ladies of the court. Lancelot launched out in the praise of Beatrice in such a manner, that the three knights judged he was in love with her. " I do not possess so much temerity," replied Lancelot : " the insensibility of which she had given so much proof, and which has assembled us all about her, is a preservative from the danger of her charms ; among us, hitherto, the king of Pannonia only has ventured to declare himself her lover, for kings have no doubt of any thing ; I suspect, besides, that the last of the four sons of Aimon, the youthful Guichard, loves her in secret ; but he is so timid, that the war, whatever its duration may be, will certainly be over before he will venture to make known his love. For my own part, I have declared myself the knight of the young and charming Delia, the favourite of Beatrice ; with a countenance expressive of the tenderest sensibility, and enchanting sweetnes of manners, she has a heart as inaccessible to

* As well as Tassillon, duke of Bavaria ; he had married a daughter of Didier.

loye as that of Beatrice; I have many rivals, and we are all treated with like indifference. The other young ladies, attached to the duchess, are all distinguished by the gracefulness of their persons, and the cultivation of their minds. But you will meet there a lady renowned for her beauty, her virtue, and the glory of having withstood the passion of the greatest prince upon earth." — "What!" cried Isambard, "is Amalberga at the palace of Beatrice?" "She has taken the surest measure," replied Lancelot, "that of flying from court; but if, as it is believed, she secretly loves the emperor, how will she be able to forget him? the fame of that hero pursues her every where" (8). Oliver likewise asked several questions relative to the confederate princes. "I have been twice in their camp," answered Lancelot, "they are much superior in numbers to us, and have many chiefs among them very formidable for their talents and valour. Among others, Gerold, and the duke of Spoleto, and two more princes, passionate admirers of Beatrice, Henry, duke of Friuli, and the ambitious Hartrad, count of Thuringia; they also expect Constantine, prince of Greece, and son of the famous Irene" (9). After all these explanations, Lancelot assured the two friends, that Beatrice, being informed of their arrival, expected them with impatience; they promised to join her standard the day after the morrow, and Lancelot took his leave, and returned the same evening.

CHAPTER III.

THE GOLDEN HERB.

— All blest secrets,
All you unpublished virtues of the earth,
Spring with my tears; be aidant and remediate
In the good man's distress.

King Lear. SHAKESPEARE.

LANCELOT'S visit having taken up the remaining part of the evening, Barmecide promised to finish his story the next day, and he then resumed it in the following terms.

" I was in the declining state of health I have described, and, as I have already said, still attended upon Aaron at the accustomed hours. One day, after a long interview, at the moment I was going to take my leave of him, he detained me for a while. ' I had liked to forget,' said he, ' a thing, which appears to me so chimerical, that it is hardly worth talking to you about ; but it at least will prove the interest my sister takes in the pain your indisposition occasions me. You must know that Abassa, though born with a good understanding, possesses all the credulity, which perfect innocence, and the education of a seraglio, can create. She has been brought up by an old female slave named Nouraha, and in whom she places all her confidence. Nouraha, knowing the condition you were in, has been consulting, I know not what empiric, who, in her opinion, is a wonderful personage. This man has told her, that there exists upon the summit of a high mountain, in the neighbourhood of Bagdat, a miraculous plant, very difficult to be discovered, which would infallibly cure you. It might indeed be possible, that a plant, the virtues of which are but little known, might contain some which would prove beneficial in your case ; but what

what entirely destroys my hopes in that respect, is the extravagant description which the empiric makes of this fabulous plant. My sister has given me this description, which I will spare you.'—Here I interrupted the caliph, in order to express the curiosity I felt to hear it; ' Well,' said he, ' since you are determined to amuse yourself with that folly, I am going to read it to you; upon which he read as follows :

' By permission of Almighty God, and his divine prophet, there exists upon the top of a mountain eastward of Bagdat, a marvellous plant, named *The Golden Herb*; because it has the power to change the most common metals into gold. It can likewise cure all the ills of man and child by a single touch; but to man it is invisible; a pure and chaste woman has ioieiy the right of breaking it from its stalk without danger; she who has not preserved her innocence will die on endeavouring to pluck it. *The Golden Herb* must be sought for during the calm of the night only, it then shines like a lucid taper, it is only to be found in places planted with cedars (10).'

' You are aware,' said Aaron, ' what credit is due to a physician who recommends such a remedy; yet my sister entertains no doubts of the efficacy of the recipe; in consequence of which, she is desirous that search should be made after this admirable plant, and she has asked my permission to send old Nouraha this very night to the mountain, attended by Nasuf, the chief of her slaves. I have consented for this night only, finding it impossible to remove her credulity.' After having expressed my gratitude at such affectionate kindness, I quitted the caliph. My heart was so full, that the instant I found myself alone, I could not suppress my tears. A thousand different sensations agitated me at the same moment; after much reflection, and impelled on by a desire which I could not overcome, I sent for Nasuf; I knew that slave;

he

he owed his place to me, and he was intirely at my devotion. He immediately appeared ; and after having informed him of what the caliph had told me, I inquired if Nouraha knew him ? he replied, that, Nouraha having been always confined to the inmost part of the princess's palace, he had never seen her. I then declared, that I had an odd fancy to examine what steps this slave would take in order to discover the marvellous plant. Nasuf objected, that I could not see her, because she must quit me at the foot of the mountain, no man being allowed to be present at the search after The Golden Herb. I pretended, that I would conceal myself to observe her, and in fine, I asked him to substitute me in his stead ; we promised each other inviolable secrecy, and he consented to what I so ardently desired, well persuaded, that Nouraha would always imagine she had been conducted by Nasuf. I waited for night with inexpressible impatience, and, at the appointed hour, being disguised in the garments of Nasuf, I repaired to a little door of the palace which opens towards the country. I gave two raps : some minutes after the door half opened ; a female, covered with a long veil, made her appearance ; another female, who accompanied her, asked me who I was. I answered in a low voice, *I am Nasuf* ; at these words one of them went out, the door was shut to, and we began our walk. My companion trembled and tottered at every step she took ; I was more confused than herself, but kept profound silence. We continued for a quarter of an hour to walk along the banks of the Tigris ; we then traversed a small wood, at the end of which we discovered the foot of the mountain. My timid companion drew back her arm which she had passed under mine, and made me a sign with her hand to withdraw. I instantly obeyed. The night was clear and bright ; I perceived an enormous rock at a small distance from me ; I drew that way, and concealed myself

self behind the rock among the shrubs ; I placed myself in such a manner as to be able to observe through the branches the person whose motions inspired me with so much interest.—She stood for some time motionless ; I then observed her prepare to lift up her veil. O presentiment of love ! the conversation with the caliph made me penetrate what pride and presumption would never have ventured to imagine, but what love should have divined ! Yes ; I expected to find Abassa substituted in the place of her slave, that Abassa, whose charming countenance I had never beheld ;—and, in truth, it was she herself ! She lifted up her veil ; the moon shed sufficient light to enable me to distinguish her features ; I saw her side-face only, but I was not less struck with her transcendent beauty. I expected indeed to see her, but so wide is the difference between the best founded hope and real certitude, that I felt almost as much surprise as delight on this occasion. She stretched forth her arms towards heaven, and fell down upon her knees : ‘ Supreme being,’ cried she, ‘ O thou, the sovereign arbiter of our destiny, deign to hear and conduct me ! My hands are innocent, my heart is tender, thou knowest it.—If thou wilt have a victim, I devote myself without regret or struggle ; take my life, it is useless, but prolong the valuable existence of the benefactor of this empire.’—Scarce had she finished uttering these words, when, impelled by a movement which was impossible to repress, I flew towards her, and threw myself at her feet : she instantly knew me, and drawing back with terror, ‘ O Barmecide,’ cried she, ‘ to what dreadful peril dost thou venture to expose thyself * !’ On saying this, she hastily let down her veil, and endeavoured to go away ; I detained her, and said all the passionate things that love and

* It is well known, that any man, who saw one of the wives or relations of the caliph without a veil, incurred the penalty of death.

gratitude could inspire : she replied only with sobs and tears. I held her robe fast, and conjured her to listen to me, but she still made vain efforts to escape. ‘ Ah, I too plainly see,’ said I, ‘ that compassion only led you here ; well, Abassa, if I am not the most happy of men, punish me for having been one of the most daring. Yes, I can venture to adore you. I have ventured to believe that the same sentiments which drew me here, had likewise been your guide. I am now fatally undeceived, but having enjoyed but for a few moments only such an error, can I support my existence after it is removed ? Forbear, forbear an unavailing search, since I am not loved, for pity at least let me die.’ In speaking thus I let go her robe ; Abassa continued motionless, and heaving a deep sigh, ‘ Ungrateful man !’ exclaimed she. At this word, so dear to my heart, I seized her trembling hand, and kissed it with rapture ! ‘ O heavens,’ said Abassa, all dismayed, ‘ can I be still worthy to discover the plant which can save thy life ?’—Love alone had the power of dispelling the fears of the credulous and tender Abassa : she suffered me to persuade her, that The Golden Herb could not cure a melancholy of which she herself was the real cause ; and she now indulged the happiness of expressing, without constraint, the sentiments which had been so long concealed in the inmost recesses of her soul. But soon the dreadful idea of an eternal separation arose to taint the delight of this tender converse ; the caliph had allowed, for one night only, the research after The Golden Herb. Abassa, in a few minutes, was going to return to the seraglio, and there to shut up herself for ever. However, we were less unhappy than before this interview had taken place ; we had no hopes, it is true, but were both certain of being beloved !—We contrived means of holding correspondence together, not by letter, for that was impossible, but by agreeing to certain signs, which were expressive

five of assurance of fidelity, of love, and of the desire to meet again ; and the caliph himself, without being at all able to suspect it, was to be every day the interpreter of our sentiments. We were forced to separate two hours before day-light ; our farewell was as afflicting as it was tender, and if you have ever loved, you ought to conceive what we felt, when stopping at the door of the seraglio, and obliged to give the signal of our arrival, I saw the fatal door open which was soon to shut upon Abaffa, and separate me from her for ever !

" From that moment love became the predominant sentiment of my heart ; the violent agitation it had produced, the endearing occupation it every instant afforded, soon relieved me from the languid condition into which I had been thrown by labour, disquietude, and sorrow. As soon as we are loved, we are never without hope ; and however unfortunate it may prove, a mutual affection suffuses an interest over our whole life, which fills up every vacuity, and for which nothing can compensate. Frequently, on an evening, I visited the foot of the mountain where I had seen Abaffa, and there wrapped in delicious melancholy, I enjoyed my remembrances, and even my regret !— Every morning I passed under a window of the seraglio ; I there contemplated with delight a suspended veil, which, in spight of the prodigious height of the windows, I could distinguish through two iron bars ; this was one of the mysterious signals of Abaffa ; I replied to it by throwing a stone against the wall ; and I was certain the noise would express the sentiment I felt, and that love knew how to interpret it. On a certain day of every week, I went upon the Tigris with a numerous band of musicians ; I knew that Abaffa, from one of the terraces of her palace, was lending an attentive ear to this concert, of which she herself was the object. The musicians filled a large bark, as for myself I was alone in a

small

small skiff, or rather, I was with Abassa ; I fancied I heard and saw her, and surely I saw her ; imagination imparted to me her sentiments during this excursion, which thus created a portion of the delight which a rendezvous affords to a happy lover. I repaired every day to the caliph at the appointed hour, and this visit was now grown extremely interesting to me ; Aaron never received me but upon leaving his sister, and I was certain that he would, without his having the least suspicion of it, bear me some dear token of the remembrance of the ingenuous and tender Abassa ; at one time, while I was with him, a slave came to offer the caliph, on the part of the princesses, a basket filled with flowers ; Aaron received the present, but I knew that myself was the sole object of the message. Love still furnished me with purer and dearer gratifications ; Abassa had honoured me with the glorious title of *benefactor of the empire*. It was incumbent on me to justify such a title. What delight did this idea blend with my labours ! Each beneficent edict was published in the streets, and in the courts of the palace : I dared to indulge the idea, that on hearing these proclamations, Abassa secretly congratulated herself on the choice she had made. She had founded several asylums of hospitality * : I took delight in augmenting them, in adding to their endowments, and rendering them, by their magnificence and utility, worthy of the name of her who had founded them.

“ Four months had elapsed since the happy night in which I had seen Abassa. It was now the middle of autumn ; one morning the caliph sent for me, and when I entered the palace he came forth to meet me, and taking me by the arm, said he wished to take a little excursion with me. When we were out of the

* We read in the history of the Arabs and Turks, that almost all the princesses and sultanas employed a portion of their treasures to form public establishments of this nature.

palace,

palace, ‘ I am going to show you,’ said he, laughing, ‘ something very curious, and which has been kept a secret from me, for I only heard of it yesterday evening.’—The manner in which the caliph spoke was sufficient to banish all disquietude ; yet observing that he conducted me towards the mountain, I felt a violent emotion ; I begged him to explain himself. ‘ No,’ replied he, ‘ I am desirous you should have the pleasure of being taken by surprise.’ As he said these words, I cast my eyes towards the mountain, and perceived, with great astonishment, a magnificent obelisk, constructed with white marble, erected on the very spot where I had thrown myself at Abassa’s feet ; on drawing nearer, I saw beside the rock a large tent open on one side, in which was a single seat. ‘ All this,’ said Aaron, ‘ is the work of my sister ; she wished to immortalize the nocturnal excursion of her Nouraha, for she does not conceive that ever woman could have undertaken a more hardy and perilous enterprise than to wander alone, and unveiled, over that rugged mountain. Abassa has caused this obelisk to be framed, together with this hospitable tent for the weary traveller, or for such as come in quest of *The Golden Herb* ; and a multitude of workmen, by her orders, have last night erected these glorious monuments of the courage of Nouraha.’ After this explication, which touched me to the soul, I remarked a long inscription upon the obelisk ; I was drawing nearer to it, but the caliph holding me ; ‘ Before you read this inscription,’ said he, ‘ I must communicate some trifling particulars, of which I did not inform you at the time, because they could only interest Abassa from whom I received them. You must know then, that Nouraha, doubtless to make a merit of it, gave her a pompous account of her wanderings over the mountain ; Nouraha pretended, that she saw *The Golden Herb* glitter, but at the moment she endeavoured to pluck it, the wonderful plant suddenly disappeared ;

disappeared ; in fine, Nouraha, after a moment of sanguine delight, quitted the mountain in the deepest sorrow ; she stopped near the rock, and there she wept ; the inscription gives, in a figurative style, an account of these different occurrences ; now you will be able to understand it ; read, and remember that it is Nouraha who speaks.'—At these words I drew near the obelisk, and read some Arabic verses, of which the following is a literal translation.

' I came here the fifteenth of the moon of saphar, guided by the purest of all sentiments. My happiness at first surpassed my expectation ; my eyes contemplated what I dared not hope to see ! transported with delight, I then knew that the supreme good was no chimera ! But this enchantment endured only an instant, it is passed away, and leaves me an eternal regret, an indelible remembrance ! O thou, who art drawn here by a similar sentiment, repose in that asylum, and in thy vows forget not her who has prepared it for thee.'

" I experienced such emotion on perusing this ingenuous and touching inscription, that the excess of my confusion might have betrayed me, had the caliph observed it ; but so far was he from suspecting the truth, that the condition I was in wholly escaped his notice. He remarked only that the name of Nouraha had been forgotten upon the obelisk, and that but one seat was to be found in the tent, circumstances which he imputed entirely to the negligence of the workmen.

" On that very evening, however, I told the caliph, that having reflected on the importance which the princess attached to the enterprise of Nouraha, and that act having been performed with a view of restoring me to health, I considered it was my own duty to celebrate it likewise ; Aaron replied that it would prove a certain means of paying my court to his sister. Thus authorised by the caliph, I sent in

quest of artists who should pass the night in forming, under my own inspection, the plan of a superb temple, upon the front of which I wrote these words, *To Gratitude*. On the following day, attended by a numerous suite, I went to the foot of the mountain, and laid myself the first stone of the edifice. I then repaired to the caliph, I put the plan of this monument into his hands, entreating him to lay it before the princess. This answer was not so expressive as the letter she had written me upon the obelisk; I could impart a single sentiment only, and she had been able to express all she felt; but at least I endeavoured, that the temple I was consecrating to her should become one of the noblest monuments of the capital of that great empire. This temple was immensely large; its inside was covered with yellow-antique, and decorated with columns of amethyst. On entering, the object that first struck the sight was a statue of white marble, representing a woman concealed under a veil, and placed upon a magnificent pedestal ornamented with gilt bronze: at the foot of the statue stood an altar, upon which a perfume continually ascended from an alabaster vase, and formed an odorous and mysterious cloud, which reached to the height of the statue; this was the sacred fire, which I caused to be fed night and day with religious attention: between the columns were placed spacious vases of porphyry, filled with flowers. Availing myself of the streams which issued from the rocky part of the mountain, I constructed various fountains within the temple. This edifice had six grand entrances, the folding doors of which were shut in the night only, and were concealed in the thickness of the walls, while the sun illumined the horizon; but six light sheets of limpid water, falling from the top of these entrances, formed, during the day, six transparent blinds, which, by touching a single spring, were lowered or stopped at pleasure. These brilliant curtains

curtains preserved a delicious coolness through the whole edifice ; moreover, being persuaded that all magnificence, whatever might be the motive, is only vain ornament, when it contributes not to public utility ; and thinking besides, that a beneficent institution would prove a homage most worthy of Abaffa, I placed in the peristyle of the temple a kind of box, upon which was read an inscription to the following purport :

‘ If any unfortunate and oppressed people be yet to be found, in the dominions of the most just and generous of princes, let them here deposit their grievances. Their complaints shall be read every day, and their ills redressed. For Barmecide is desirous, that henceforward all they, who come to the foot of this mountain, shall be led thither by hope, and find happiness there.’

“ The last lines of this inscription retraced my own adventure ; I flattered myself that Abaffa would comprehend my meaning ; in fact, she did not misunderstand me, the caliph having observed, that she read the last sentence with tender approbation. In order to render this spot celebrated, I instituted a public festival for the people, on the anniversary of the research of the golden herb ; it was celebrated each returning year, to the very period of my flight, in memory of the event it consecrated ; it did not begin till night, and was not over till three hours before day-break. The caliph was not at all astonished at what I had done in this respect ; he knew that by choice I led a simple and even frugal life, but that I displayed the utmost magnificence in all works of beneficence and public utility. It appeared besides to him exceedingly natural, that knowing, as I did, better than any one, his extreme tenderness for Abaffa, and the extraordinary ascendancy that young princess had over his mind, I should have availed myself with eagerness of this favourable occasion of rendering a splendid homage

homage to the sister of my sovereign and benefactor. There is, indeed, no danger that princes should ever be surprised at what is done for them ; the most passionate attachment, and the grossest flattery, cannot produce an act of devotedness or magnificence sufficient to astonish them. Notwithstanding the prodigious number of artists and workmen which I employed in the construction of my temple, the work at the end of five months was not yet finished ; at that period a war broke out ; I had for two years past exerted my anxious endeavours to prolong peace, which is so necessary to public welfare ; but when I found that war was necessary, I was desirous to declare it ; I had a double motive for courting glory, since it appeared to me that glory alone could reconcile me to the frightful distance which would separate me from Abaffa. A little while previous to my entering into the ministry, I had made a single campaign in the late war under the eyes of the caliph ; this prince, justly renowned for his military talents, had judged of mine in so favourable a way, that he would then have raised me to the first rank had not the enemy accepted a peace on the caliph's own conditions. Encouraged by this remembrance, and knowing that the caliph would not take the field during the first campaign, I ventured to ask for the command of the army, and I obtained it. This campaign lasted three months, and was crowned with a continual succession of victory and triumph, and what constituted its greatest glory, it was followed by a peace. The caliph had himself been too much accustomed to successes of this nature, to be envious of them in another ; he was on the contrary highly flattered, that a young man of twenty-five only, of whom he had made choice in preference to so many veterans, should have achieved so splendid an expedition. My entry into Bagdat was triumphant. The people in crowds ran to meet me, and escorted me to the gates of the palace ; the shouts of joy of that

that generous people inebriated me with delight ; a delight so much the more delicious to me, as it was impossible that Abaffa did not hear their acclamations. O, how I loved that people who afforded me so sweet a triumph, that people whose gratitude will for ever illustrate the name of Barmecide !—The praises of poets immortalise their own talents alone ; the favours of sovereigns bestow only an artificial grandeur which vanishes away at their displeasure, but the acclamation of the people constitutes real renown. As I was proceeding up the first flight of steps which led to the palace, I perceived the caliph on the top of them. He held a wreath of laurel in his hand, and came down to meet me. When I came near him, I stopped, and, agreeably to the oriental custom, I bent one knee to the ground. ‘ That,’ said he, observing my attitude, ‘ is a homage rendered to birth, here is one to heroism ;’ on saying these words he placed upon my head the wreath of laurel. The people applauded this act with inexpressible transport, the caliph lifted me up, and taking me under the arm, led me into the palace. When we were together in his cabinet, ‘ Barmecide,’ said he, ‘ in you I have just been crowning valour and military talents ; but innocence and sensibility will likewise present a well earned tribute to him whose exploits have given peace to the empire ; receive this olive wreath, formed by the hands of Abaffa ; she has charged me to present it to the *heroic pacificator*.’ At these words I prostrated myself, and seizing the caliph’s hand, I watered it with tears !—He was himself much affected ; we remained mute for a few moments, when the caliph resuming his discourse, ‘ Go,’ said he, ‘ and take some repose, return here to-morrow at the same hour.—To-morrow !—Barmecide, you shall be sensible of all the esteem and friendship I have for you.’ These last words he uttered with a tenderness which penetrated my very soul ; not daring to ask him any questions, I withdrew, as he had

had ordered, but in a condition utterly impossible to describe. Intoxicated with glory and felicity, I passed the whole night in reflecting upon the last words of the caliph, upon his emotion, and on the invaluable wreath of olive conferred upon me.—He was to give me the greatest proof of *esteem and friendship!*—I was invested with the most eminent employment, I enjoyed an immense fortune from his bounty; what farther could he have to bestow?—My heart dared to anticipate it, and in vain my reason combated the idea: a thousand remembrances, a thousand circumstances I recollect~~ed~~, confirmed me in the dearest and most daring hope: at length, I had no doubt but that the caliph intended to give me the hand of Abassa. This idea inspired me with unbounded gratitude; I severely condemned myself for the opinion I had hitherto entertained of his disposition; I taxed myself with injustice and unthankfulness; I could no longer conceive how I could have thus judged of a prince, who appeared to me the most perfect model of a friend and sovereign. I framed excuses for every thing that had shocked me in his conduct; I was sensible only of his great qualities and the favours he had conferred. In a word, he became as dear to me as my love itself; O were princes but aware of all the advantage they might derive from those they govern; did they know to what pitch of enthusiasm and idolatry they might lead them, they would perhaps set a higher value upon this kind of domination!

“ You may easily imagine the ardent impatience with which I expected the hour of rendezvous which the caliph had appointed me. It was impossible not to be there before the time; he was not at all surprised at this, and making me sit down by him, he held the following discourse. ‘ You have rendered me eminent services; your cares and your labours have relieved me from the weight of public affairs; your converse has made me taste the sweets of social intercourse;

course ; disgusted by repetition, fatigued by the dissipation of noisy and tumultuous amusements, grown callous to pleasure and even to glory, friendship is become necessary to my happiness ; I love but yourself and my sister, and, as you are sensible, I have long lamented that I could not receive at the same time, two persons I held so dear, Abaffa can only appear before me or her husband ; I offer you her hand, Barmecide, but on a condition which doubtless will seem severe to you.'—Here the caliph paused ; I was so violently affected that I was fearful of betraying what I felt by my reply ; I had taken a resolution before hand to restrain my transports, and to express only a respectful gratitude ; I therefore bowed, and casting down my eyes, kept silence. Aaron resuming his discourse ; 'I am going to open my heart to you,' said he, 'Abaffa appears to me a person of such high accomplishments, that, were she not my sister, marriage would have united us together ; but since the most amiable and most beautiful woman in the east cannot become the wife of Aaron, no other has a right to possess her ; besides, I ought not to suffer, that the blood of Ali should be contaminated by a foreign alliance, and you must be aware that the nephews of your brothers cannot be mine * (11). Thus I give my friend the hand of my sister, but I cannot allow him to assume the rights of a husband ; on the contrary, I require his most sacred promise, that he will never be more to Abaffa, than I myself am—a friend and a brother ; and on this condition only, can I allow such an union. Speak, Barmecide, do you promise me this ?—To this question it was necessary to make some reply ; struck with astonishment and stung with indignation, yet transported at the idea that I should see Abaffa every day, and that in spite

* All this discourse of the caliph is taken from history. See note 29, at the end of the volume.

of a tyrant's caprice she would be mine; I experienced as much emotion as indignation and surprise; as much delight as anger, but I dissembled all which passed within me. I promised every thing; the caliph exacted terrible oaths, and I made them: he then told me he had obtained the consent of the princess, and that our nuptials should be solemnized on the following day, in the most magnificent manner. He concluded by declaring, that Abaffa entirely approved his pleasure, but that, notwithstanding his reliance on my word, I should never see the princess but in his presence, and that he should watch me with equal severity and vigilance. I replied very coolly, that being wholly addicted to public business, love never led my reason astray, that I considered that passion as weakness, and could screen myself from it without difficulty. After this protestation I retired in a state of mind I will not attempt to describe, but which you will easily conceive.—But influenced by one sole idea, I ceased to hate the caliph's tyranny, on reflecting, that in a few hours Abaffa would publicly pronounce the vow that would for ever unite us together. The temple I had erected was at length finished; and the morrow, the day appointed for our nuptials, was likewise that of the festival of the temple. As soon as the dawn appeared, I put on the magnificent garments the caliph had given me, and I sent the gifts to the seraglio, which custom required me to present to the princess; at eight o'clock I received an order to repair to the mosque, and scarcely had I entered, when the princess arrived. She was veiled, conducted by the caliph, and surrounded by all her slaves; she did not unveil herself, and after the ceremony was over, the caliph took her by the hand, and told me to follow him to the temple at the foot of the mountain, adding that, as the festival of the people did not begin till night, we should pass the day there. Being arrived at the temple, the slaves formed a circle

a circle around it, that no man might come near. The caliph, the princess, and myself, entered the temple ; I was seized with a violent fluttering at the heart, and I equally desired and dreaded the instant, in which Abaffa would take off her veil, the instant in which I should behold, in the face of day, that adored countenance. I judged of her distress by my own. I easily conceived what she must have felt on finding herself at the foot of the mountain, and in the temple of which she was the divinity, and I had no idea of being able to bear her first look, or that so much love and so much confusion would escape the piercing eyes of Aaron. At length being arrived at the extremity of the temple, the caliph said, turning towards his sister : ‘ Come, my dear Abaffa, now lift up your veil.’ At these words, the princess made no reply, and remained motionless ; the caliph resumed his discourse : ‘ I conceive,’ said he, ‘ all your embarrassment, and how strange it must appear to you to show yourself unveiled ; but the more you hesitate the more will that timidity grow upon you ; it must, however, be surmounted ; Barmecide is your husband, and remember, that he has only received your hand to procure me the happiness of seeing both at the same time, and in order to rid you of that troublesome veil.’ On speaking this, Aaron, observing that Abaffa had not the resolution to obey him, drew near her to lift up her veil ; at this she started, and still made resistance to the caliph’s will : but the veil was at last removed, and Abaffa decked in all the gifts of nature, and all the grace of youth and bashfulness, appeared before me ! The modest suffusion of her countenance, her beautiful down-cast eyes, her long eye-lashes humid with tears, the ebon hue of which still added new charms to the vivid carnation of her cheek ; the sweetness of her mien, her bloom, the majesty of her stature ; every thing, even the immobility of her look, displayed her whole per-

son to such advantage, that the caliph himself was too much struck with it to have leisure to observe the impression it made upon me. But while we were gazing with much attention, we observed Abaffa suddenly turn pale ; her head hung down upon her bosom, she gave her hand to her brother, and fell into his arms in a swoon. The caliph commanded me to go out, and send the princess's slaves to him. I obeyed ; and dismayed, beside myself, a prey to the most excruciating anxiety, I retired to the tent to await the caliph's call ; I was terribly alarmed lest this fainting should have given the prince some suspicions ; but after half an hour's suspense he came and removed all my apprehensions : ‘ This scene must have alarmed you,’ said he, ‘ and, indeed, an European cannot but be surprised at it ; as for myself, I expected something similar would happen ; such is the force of custom, and you have seen what a struggle it costs the brightest beauty of the east to remove the veil which hid her charms from the gaze of mankind. Abaffa, however, has recovered the use of her senses, she declares she can now get over her timidity, and consents to see you again. Come, let us join her ; but do not look at her, or speak of what has passed.’ On saying this, the caliph took me under the arm, and we returned to the temple. The princess, on perceiving us, sent away her slaves ; Aaron made us sit down, and placed himself between us, so that I could hardly have a glimpse of Abaffa, but I never caught her looks during the whole day, for her eyes were always cast on the ground. In other respects she took a part in the conversation, and on several occasions uttered the most affectionate things, which could only be understood by myself, and the true meaning of which it was impossible for the caliph to divine. We dined in the temple, and the caliph seated himself at table between the princess and me. After dinner, Aaron proposed a walk upon the

the mountain. Abassa resumed her veil ; from that moment, she conversed with more ease and freedom, she often addressed her discourse to me ; at the decline of the day, we returned to the temple, and waited there till the hour in which the people were to repair thither to celebrate the festival ; then the caliph took Abassa by the hand and went out ; I had caused the mountain to be illuminated, and had placed a band of musicians behind the rocks. The caliph and the princess stayed more than half an hour, to enjoy the spectacle and listen to the music ; they then quitted me to return to the palace. This, indeed, was a dreadful moment. Notwithstanding the constraint which the most capricious tyranny had imposed upon me, the day which had just passed away had been the brightest of my whole existence ; for how could I be otherwise than happy on seeing her I adored, and whose face and mien were attended with all the interest of novelty, as well as on considering that a sacred tie united us, and that at least I should never have the affliction to see another make pretensions to her hand ? But on leaving me, she carried with her all the sweet enchantment which her presence had created ; I found myself all alone, felicity appeared nothing more than a vain illusion, and the dear name of husband a cruel imposture, which far from satisfying my love, could only irritate and drive it to desperation. Too much agitated to take repose, I passed almost the whole night in a retired part of the mountain ; there sorrowfully sitting upon the crag of a rock, I indulged the most painful reflections ; I heard from afar the cries of the people, whose unconstrained and genuine joy is always obstreperous. I experienced some consolation on considering that this people in the midst of their revels were blessing Barmecide ; several times I heard the echo of the mountain repeat my name ; and I cried, ‘O, grateful people, it is to you alone that talents should be consecrated ; it is you alone

alone that should be served, and not insolent and barbarous despots, who make the most sacred rights of love and nature the sport of their caprice !—Thus was it that I gave vent to my grief, the bitterness of which was increased by each successive thought ; this dark melancholy, however, was almost entirely dispelled, at the appearance of the first rays of morning ;—the day which I saw arise, with rapture, announced that in a few hours I should again see Abassa, and I forgot my affliction, and gave myself up to all the charms of such soothing hope. Fearful of betraying too much eagerness, I did not attend upon the caliph a moment before the accustomed hour ; I found the princess there, she blushed on seeing me, and kept silence for a while, but recovering herself by degrees, she not only grew bold enough to address her conversation to me, but even to meet my eyes. The first look, so full of sentiment and confusion, produced an inexpressible effect upon my heart.—Ah, what inconceivable charms does bashfulness add to beauty ! And what enjoyments, pure as itself, what new delights does it procure to love !—Bashfulness can multiply favours, and give inestimable value both to what it refuses and what it is fearful to grant !—That stolen and timid look rendered me satisfied and happy for the rest of the day. On the morrow, I was passionately desirous, that Abassa should venture to look me in the face ; I waited a long while for this favour, and never obtained it without observing her fine eyes fill with tears, and the deepest blush suffuse itself over her face. The caliph always seated himself between us, which gave us an opportunity of looking at each other, without his being able to perceive it. Aaron loved reading, and was fond of poetry, and he frequently recited verses of his own composition. One day as he was taken up with a long lecture, I passed one of my hands behind his chair, and by a supplicating gesture, I entreated the princess

princess to give me hers ; I shall never forget the expression of her countenance at this moment ; love, desire, embarrassment, and dread were depicted there with such simplicity and energy, as gave me great alarm ; and hastily desisting from my intention, I arose, and stood before the caliph during the rest of the lecture. The following day I easily observed, that Abassa remarked I looked sad and thoughtful, and I perceived she was forming a project of consoling me, and that she was inclined to grant of her own accord, what she had before denied me, but she hesitated a long time ere she could determine upon it. One evening, at length, she timidly held out her trembling hand, I seized it with transport !—It is the province of virtuous love only to appreciate such an act !—How many lovers are there, who are unable to conceive, that this moment formed an epocha in my life, and that no other moment of happiness has since been sufficient to impair the delight its recollection always affords ! The caliph, who, in the early part of this intercourse, had always attentively observed my motions, did not entertain the slightest suspicion of our intelligence ; attributing to modesty and confusion the frequent perturbation and blushes of Abassa ; and I had been able to persuade him, that being entirely under the dominion of ambition and the love of glory, my soul was inaccessible to all other passions. He believed it, and through refinement of pride and tyranny, he was in some measure displeased with me for not being more sensible to the charms of the most accomplished woman in the universe ; he would have felt a kind of gratification to have seen me anxious without hope, and I was aware, that he considered the sacrifice of a violent passion not alone sufficient to acquit me, with regard to what I owed him.

“ This situation continued for two months, when I at length ventured to write to the princess, and slip my

my note into her hand ; she wrote me an answer, and I do not believe I ever suffered more than on the day I received this first reply ; for an instant after the caliph began to read a subject which took up three tedious hours ; being in possession of the first letter from Abaffa, I would have given the half of my life for a few minutes liberty ; but how was I compensated for this painful constraint, when I perused the tender and affectionate billet ! My love and my imagination were inflamed to such a degree, that in my second note I ventured to demand a private interview ; it was necessary to communicate this to Nouraha and Nasuf, but on the fidelity of those two slaves we had the greatest dependence : I laid down the whole plan of precautions which were to be observed in this dangerous undertaking. Abaffa consented to all, and on the following night, at the foot of the mountain consecrated by our love, in the temple erected on the same spot which was witness to our first vows, I received into my arms my adorable bride. Abaffa, believing there would be less danger in meeting in the seraglio itself, and having suggested all the means of effecting it, we agreed that henceforward I should pass the night there once or twice in a month. Nothing can equal the felicity I enjoyed, during the space of six months ; difficulty and mystery gave a captivating charm to our union, which but rarely attends the most happy nuptials ; as it was necessary to brave and risk every thing to see each other in private ; thus danger itself imparted to love the endearing sentiment of passionate gratitude. But I paid dearly for this supreme felicity ! Abaffa now bore about her the fatal pledge of our union ! When it was no longer possible to doubt of this, conceive, if you are able, what was the excess of my embarrassment, and dreadful anxiety ! How was it possible to conceal a condition from the caliph, which we could not flatter ourselves would escape the slightest notice ? Occupied day and night

night with this sole idea, I had not the least glimpse of an expedient to screen us from the impending danger : I was too well acquainted with the inflexible pride of Aaron, and the ferocity of his first movements of passion, not to be convinced, that on the discovery of our secret, he would exercise vengeance upon us with equal cruelty and madness. I shuddered on thinking, that I should involve Abassa in my fall, I upbraided myself in desperation, with the fatal passion which caused her ruin. O, how I then execrated the cruel tyrant, whose inhuman caprice, overturning the eternal laws of reason and nature, robbed me of the happiness attached to the sacred names of husband and father, and, in the sanction of the most legal union, created me all the heart-rending remorse of criminal seduction ! At length an event as fortunate as it was unexpected took place to snatch us from the destruction which menaced us. One of the tributary princes of the caliph erected the standard of rebellion. Aaron determined to go in person to subjugate and punish him. Judge of the joy this resolution caused me, for I was sensible the expedition could not be quickly terminated. It was the caliph's pleasure that I should accompany him, and I was obliged to entrust my dearest interests to two slaves, to Nasuf and Nouraha ; but those slaves had feeling and grateful hearts. I left them the most ample instructions, and every thing was happily executed agreeably to what I had prescribed. Whilst, at the distance of three hundred leagues from Bagdat, we were laying siege to the rebel prince in his capital, Abassa became mother of a child, which Nasuf, according to my directions, sent to Mecca ; those who carried it, and those by whom it was received, had not the least suspicion of its birth (12). Uncertain when I should see the child, and hoping to preserve its existence, I determined to enable myself one day to recognise it with certainty. I had learned a secret during

during my travels, which I communicated to Nasuf, and by the aid of which he marked, in an indelible manner, upon the right shoulder of the infant, a small olive wreath, a miniature representation of that which I had received from the hands of its mother. The child was not sent to Mecca before this operation was attended with perfect success *.

“ I do not enter into the detail of the precautions I had taken to secure the secrecy of the princess’s delivery, I will content myself by observing they were so well combined, that the mystery remained undiscovered. At the army I received the news of this happy event, and three months afterwards the caliph returned victorious to Bagdat. With what joy, and tender solicitude did I meet Abafia ! But the dreadful danger she had run, the anxious disquietudes we had experienced, induced me to take the resolution of renouncing in future the gratification of seeing her in private ; love alone, which had rebelled against the prohibition of a tyrant, could thus make sacrifice of itself ; I would have braved every peril as far as it related to myself ; but this painful duty the welfare of Abafia imposed on me, as well as that of the two faithful slaves, whose lives each of our rendezvous exposed to danger. Abafia, impressed with the same sentiments, confirmed me in the resolution I had taken ; I made her but one more nocturnal visit, and vowed, at her feet, never to see her again ! With what rapidity did that night steal away ! In what affliction did I taste the felicity of it ! Violent and capricious state, in which love, at once both happy and miserable, did not without murmurs yield itself up to the sweetest transports, and found the cause of its torments, and the measure of its regret, in the very

* It is known, that the savages have ever possessed this secret, and paint in this manner their bodies with plants, flowers, serpents, &c. ; this painting lasts the person’s life, and nothing can efface the design or colours.

excess of its happiness ! This interview was, indeed, the last ! Since that period, I have not in the course of seven years seen my wife, but in the presence of the tyrant. We wrote to each other every day, and during the first two years, the care of giving Abaffa an account of her son added a new interest to our correspondence. The child, who continued still at Mecca, was brought up in obscurity under the care of a person who believed him to be the nephew of Nasuf. With Nasuf I not only appeared to have no intercourse, but, by a refinement in precaution, we agreed, that he should appear to be much dissatisfied with me ; he solicited a favour of me in public, I refused him in the coldest manner, and he made complaint to the caliph, adding that he was hated by me, and that I had even prejudiced the princess against him. The caliph, who esteemed him for his zeal and fidelity, spoke to us concerning him, we made a flight reply, and the caliph, in order to put an end to the domestic dissension, took Nasuf about his own person, and appointed another chief of the slaves for his sister. Nasuf affected to triumph in an insolent manner, I treated him with much seeming disdain, while the caliph was secretly gratified to see his slave venture to brave his favourite.

" Princes have an infinity of such kind of gratifications, which cannot be divined but by living with them, and of which the vulgar can form no idea. Aaron was well persuaded that Nasuf detested me, and that I was really much piqued at his audacity ; this delusion relieved me from all apprehensions with regard to my son, in case the caliph should happen to discover that Nasuf brought up a child at Mecca ; I was certain he would then believe, without examination, that this child was in reality the nephew of Nasuf, and that he would make no conclusions which might lead to farther discovery. In the mean while I felt the strongest inclination to see a child that was so dear

dear to me. Nasuf obstinately opposed this inclination, but on the expiration of two years, I declared to him my determined intention to go to Mecca, in the course of four months. Nasuf assisted me inconcerting the means of taking this journey, and seeing my son, without becoming liable to suspicion; but alas! at the end of two months, he came to announce to me that this child, the object of such dear hopes and tender affection, had been attacked by a contagious disorder and was no more! I was deeply afflicted at this loss which our situation rendered irreparable. Under the tormenting restraint I had imposed upon myself, I had had no consolation but that of reflecting there was still left me a pledge of our union. Nasuf advised me to conceal this misfortune from the princess; he represented to me that she would perhaps sink under it, and that, as she was never to see the child, it was easy to deceive her in that respect, and to leave her for ever in an error which was so necessary to her repose. I yielded the more readily to his advice, as it seemed to me she might love me less on being informed, that the dear tie which united us was broken. Thus has she been ever kept ignorant of this fatal event. But how distressing her letters now became to me! She was continually making mention of her child, every instant seemed to increase her maternal affection; I was obliged to reply, and while I wept for the death of my son, I was under daily necessity of giving her ample particulars respecting his education, his improvement and health: thus time, which cures the wounds of the heart, by the oblivion which necessarily accompanies it, was unable to produce such effect upon me. The unabating tenderness of Abassa, however, diverted my attention and afforded me great consolation; the caliph, fully convinced that we entertained for each other nothing more than esteem and confidence, no longer watched us, and we were left much at liberty. I was allowed

to seat myself by her side, to converse with her in a friendly style, without his taking umbrage. Frequently we all three walked out together. The princess would place herself between her brother and me, and lean on my arm; sometimes the caliph, having orders to give, would leave us alone together for several minutes; how precious were these moments! What enchantment they threw over the rest of the day! What delicious remembrances did they leave us! The duties of my station occupied all the time I was absent from Abaffa; I was alive to the glory of rendering a whole people happy, of having revived their industry, secured the blessing of peace, and made arts and commerce flourish. Surrounded by artists and men of letters, living with my brothers in perfect harmony, I tasted every delight which friendship and society could afford. My brothers were all married; in the midst of a loved and numerous progeny, I could not consider myself in exile; I watched the growth of the children, and their existence in a great measure compensated for the loss of mine."

At this part of Barmecide's narrative, Isambard observing it was past eleven, the company separated, after having agreed to meet again the next morning, to hear the remaining part of Barmecide's story.

CHAPTER IV.

THE RESENTMENT OF A DESPOT.

Sa haine va toujours plus loin que son amour.

Mitridate de RACINE.

Quelque fois à la cour

Le prix d'un long service est perdu dans un jour;

C'est là que la faveur toujours trop recherchée

N'est qu'un piège funeste où la mort est cachée.

Les Barmécides Tragédie de MR. DE LA HARPE.

THE knights being assembled at nine in the morning, in Barmecide's apartment, that illustrious fugitive

tive thus resumed his narration. " From the death of my child until the period of the dreadful catastrophe which terminates my story, my life does not afford any striking events ; for five years it had been exactly what I have been describing. At length fortune, which had done every thing for me, not only destroyed its work in a few instants, but was determined that the excess of my calamity should be still more astonishing, than the splendour of my prosperity had been. I was thirty-four years old ; I had been near twelve years the prime minister to the most powerful prince in Asia. I had always enjoyed his favour without interruption, and which no rival had even ever endeavoured to diminish ; yet, for several years past, I had remarked, that the caliph no longer loved me ; or in other words, that he no longer thought he did ; the friendship of princes lies in their head, it is of a more brittle nature than even love itself ; to preserve it requires all the attraction of novelty, or the pleasure of conferring splendid rewards upon its object ; they then enjoy his astonishment, and that of the public, and even the envy of his rivals. They have faith in the confidence of a man as long as they bestow favours ; but confide in him no more when they have nothing more to give. I was grand vizier, and brother-in-law to the caliph, he might have done every thing for my happiness ! but he could not add to my fortune ; besides, I may venture to say, that my elevation was not entirely his work ; I owed my reputation, and the love of the public, solely to my labours and conduct.

" Aaron is not an envious man ; pride as well as greatness of soul preserves him from so mean a vice ; but this same pride was mortified at the idea of my possessing some advantages independent of his favour. He was satisfied that others should think so, for that was doing honour to his choice ; but he would not allow me to entertain such an opinion. The man, who formerly

formerly had lavished upon me the most flattering eulogiums, now had no other desire than to humble my self-love, to recal my remembrance to the point from which I had started, and to make me feel my dependency. I bore all these little vexations with an indifference, which tended to increase the secret malice of Aaron ; he knew how to dissemble it, but the coldness of his conversation, and above all, his embarrassment when we were tête-à-tête, the most certain forerunner of disgrace with princes, convinced me how greatly he was changed with regard to me.

" I had always been in the habit of writing daily to the princess ; she had promised me to burn all my letters, but not being able to make that sacrifice, she had entrusted them to Nouraha, who deposited them in a place known only to herself and her mistress. Every evening Abassa gave her the letter of the day, with orders to lock it up with the rest before she went to bed. Nouraha, who had been ill for some days past, finding herself, one evening, worse than usual, forgot to conceal the letter she had received from her mistress ; she left it in her pocket and retired to rest. A young female slave slept in the same room, and was awaked in the night by the groans of Nouraha ; the slave arose, and taking a light, went to her bed-side, and found, that, having been struck with an apoplexy, she had just breathed her last. Immediately the slave, with an intention of looking for the keys to plunder Nouraha, who had been enriched by the liberality of the princess, searched her pockets, and found a letter there, which had nothing in it that could expose Nasuf, but which contained proofs of our intelligence, and particulars relative to my son, as though he were still in existence. The base slave read this letter : she knew, as every one did, that the caliph, in giving me Abassa for a wife, had meant nothing farther than conferring on me the honour of receiving her hand ; she conceived, that treachery would

would make her fortune, and full of this idea, left the seraglio at break of day, and without mentioning the death of Nouraha, carried my letter to the caliph. On leaving his apartment, she met Nasuf, and believing him to be both mine and the princess's enemy, she boasted of what she had been doing, and mentioned the contents of the letter ; Nasuf, finding he was neither named nor indicated, instantly formed the plan which he has executed with so much courage. The caliph had ordered the slave to attend in the adjacent chamber, and Nasuf waited in great trepidation the result of Aaron's reflections. He was certain, that this imperious despot was meditating terrible vengeance ; but could not foresee the atrocity of his cruelty. At length Nasuf, being called by the tyrant, entered his cabinet, and shuddered on observing his pale and ill-boding looks.—‘ Nasuf,’ said he, ‘ I am betrayed ! ’ ‘ Yes, seignior,’ replied Nasuf, ‘ the faithful slave, who has informed against the two guilty persons, has just been speaking to me of it ; I have long entertained some vague suspicions in that respect ; the princess and Barmecide dreaded my vigilance, and hence, seignior, is the true cause of the hatred they bear me.’ ‘ Nasuf,’ returned Aaron, ‘ may I depend upon thy fidelity ? ’—‘ Command me, seignior.’ ‘ Well then, let the unworthy Abafsa be thrown into a dungeon for the rest of her life ; let all who bear the odious name of Barmecide be extirpated from the face of the earth, and let them be all destroyed within the space of an hour (13).’ Nasuf, dissembling the horror he felt, seemed to share the tyrant's fury ; but he represented, that it appeared to him more adviseable, to have all these executions take place at the same moment, and he begged to be charged only with mine ; and with conducting the princess to prison. To this Aaron consented. This virtuous slave then repaired to Abafsa, informed her of every thing, promised to favour my escape, to liberate

berate her in a short time, and to accompany her in her flight. He took possession of all my letters, burned them, and conducted the wretched Abassa to the dungeon the tyrant had allotted her. After having received a note from her for me, he came to my house ; for during the heats of summer I did not live in the palace, but at a villa on the banks of the Tigris. I had passed that fatal night without retiring to rest ; Aaron had charged me with so much business the preceding day, that I had not yet finished it. I was labouring for the barbarian, when Nasuf entered my chamber. ‘ Generous Barmecide,’ said he, ‘ arm yourself with all your resolution, and read this billet.’ I laid hold of the note he presented, and read these terrible words :

‘ O canst thou forgive thy unhappy wife ? all is discovered ! my fatal affection has undone thee ! thy head is proscribed, thy brothers, with all their family, are suffering under the assassin’s stroke, and it is from the bottom of a dungeon that I write this !—Nasuf will save thee, and he promises to unite us.—Ah ! take pity upon Abassa, and if thou be not as inflexible as the author of our misery, flee, my dear husband, and follow the guidance of Nasuf.’

‘ O ! my dear brothers !’ cried I, ‘ what, at this instant they are falling by the hands of ruffians !—‘ Time is precious,’ interrupted Nasuf, ‘ follow me, seignior.’ ‘ What ! shall I flee like a vile criminal, while my brothers are murdered ! ah ! I can see their blood stream, I can hear their lamentable cries, and the cries of their children and their wives.—No, I will avenge them, or perish !’—On saying this, I snatched my sword, and rushed towards the door. Nasuf, laying hold of me, cried ; ‘ whither would you run ? your brothers are no more, ’tis now too late, but Abassa yet lives, and you are going to cause her death.’—‘ I will stab the tyrant to the heart ; I must avenge my brothers.’—‘ Ungrateful man,’ cried Nasuf,

Nasuf, ' do you owe nothing to the unhappy princess you seduced, do you owe nothing to me, who, for your sake, am exposing myself to destruction ? ' These words made me start, I remained motionless, and Nasuf, taking me by the arm, dragged me along.—I suffered myself to be led on.—Nasuf, being perfectly acquainted with my house, conducted me through a back door which opened into a court, at the end of which was a vault. He had the keys of the door, and of the vault ; for it was through that door, which lay towards the fields, that he was used to see me secretly in the night time, whenever he had any thing particular to communicate to me ; and in order not to be overheard, we were accustomed to pass this private court, and to hold converse together in the vault. He opened the door, and leading me into it, ' promise me,' said he, in the name of honour and gratitude, to have a regard for your life, and to wait here till I come to fetch you away ; and I, in return, promise you to save Abaffa, to take her out of prison, and conduct her into Europe.' At these words, I made the extorted vow, which I accompanied with a groan ; he then departed, shut the door upon me, leaving me alone in the midst of the vault, in all the horrors of darkness. I was now, for the first time in my life, seized with terror ! my imagination, struck with the massacre of my brothers, represented the horrid picture in such vivid colours, that the reality would scarce have agonized me more ! I beheld them deprived of life, pierced with wounds, extended on the ground, with their wives and children murdered in their arms ! I saw their disfigured countenances in death, still expressive of terror and despair !—It seemed as if I were surrounded with these lamentable objects, a cold sweat bedewed my whole frame ; and not being able to remain in one place, I wandered, notwithstanding the thick darkness which environed me, about the spacious vault, in so wild a manner,

that

that when I met with any obstacles in my way, or walked over any unevenness of the ground, I drew back with horror, my hair stood an end, as if I had trampled upon the bleeding bodies of my unhappy brothers. All these first moments of despair were devoted to the feelings of nature. Being at ease respecting the life of Abaffa, love, which was concentrated in my heart, seemed to be effaced thence ; the dreadful image of my whole family pitilessly murdered, annihilated every other idea ; moreover, my passion, which had proved the cause of this horrid disaster, I now considered as a crime, and had it at this moment stood forwards, I should have repulsed it as a remorseful intruder. In fine, I could only contemplate my murdered brothers, and even the desire of vengeance was less powerful than my grief. At the end of four or five hours, however, not finding Nasuf return, a frightful mistrust distracted my mind with other thoughts, and new sensations ; I began to fancy, that Nasuf had betrayed me, and that, being an accomplice of the tyrant, he had inveigled me into the vault to bury me there. I had not the key about me ; I recollect, that Nasuf had taken away my sword, and reflecting on certain other circumstances, I no longer doubted of his perfidy. Twelve years discretion and devotedness should have skreened Nasuf from this horrid suspicion, but fear and danger always produce mistrust, the just punishment of tyrants, and the greatest torment of the unfortunate. I forgot then all the services of Nasuf, being wholly taken up by reflection upon my own situation ; it appeared to me void of all probability, that Nasuf should be able to return to my house to liberate me, and afterwards to persuade the caliph he had put me to death, whilst, on the contrary, every thing seemed to prove, that he was acting in concert with my implacable oppressor. The hatred and cruelty of Aaron would, I thought, have naturally induced him to order this

kind of death, which would give him the assurance of a tedious agony, and the baseness of an assassin must have preferred treachery to any other expedient. Struck with these reflections, I considered my death as inevitable, and in the manner it seemed to approach, I contemplated it with horror. Then did my feelings on my own account call back my attention to the object of the dearest sentiments of my heart; then I fancied Abaffa could not survive me; I represented her to my imagination all bathed in tears, and languishing in a dungeon, and I fell into a lethargic oppression of mind. From this state I was quickly roused by violent fits of rage and fury, and I experienced all the torments arising from unavailing hatred and unbounded desire of vengeance. O, how dearly did the distress of this single day pay for thirteen years of glory and felicity! I should have sunk under its pressure, had not hope, which in any situation never entirely abandoned us, suddenly revived my courage. Endeavouring to figure to myself the effect which the news of my death would have on the minds of the people, I imagined such an event was likely to create a rebellion; the more I reflected, the more was I persuaded of this; and I soon became fully convinced of it; I saw the tyrant hurled from his throne, I saw Abaffa's deliverance from prison, and I cherished the wild idea, that the people would hasten to effect my own. At length, towards the evening, I heard the approach of footsteps, the door of the vault opened, and I saw Nasuf enter; his aspect alarmed me, a deadly paleness disfigured his features, his clothes were torn and stained with blood; in one hand he held a torch, and in the other, a drawn sword.—His looks, his gait, however, and the expression of his countenance, dispelled, in spite of me, all the dark suspicions I had been entertaining. I waited in silence; he came up to me, and returning my sword: ‘Come,’ said he, ‘every thing is ready for your escape,

escape, and I shall accompany you till day-break.' At these words, I was struck with remorse for my unjust suspicions, and I rushed to the arms of this generous slave, the sole friend, the only defender that fortune had left me!—' Let us lose no time,' said he, ' let us haste to quit this dangerous abode.' On saying this, he threw a large cloke over my shoulders, and taking me by the hand, we went out together; we found two horses at the back door, we mounted, and Nasuf, advancing before me, bade me follow him, and recommended me to keep profound silence 'till we should get into the open country. The sky was overcast, yet the moon, from time to time darting its beams through the clouds, afforded, at intervals, sufficient light to enable us to distinguish the surrounding objects. At first we proceeded along the walls of Bagdat; I shuddered on beholding the towers of the tyrant's palace, and turning my eyes around, I perceived the mosque in which I had received the hand of Abassa; at this spectacle I wept!—A moment afterwards we passed before the gate through which I had entered eight years before in triumph, and I felt my heart ready to burst!—Every step I took reminded me of my past glory, and revived the idea of my felicity, which was never more to return! and yet when I was out of sight of these tormenting objects, and considered I should not see them again, I fell into a kind of annihilation still more painful than all the regret I had just felt. I sorrowfully accompanied Nasuf along the banks of the Tigris, when of a sudden a confused noise struck my ear, and I distinguished plaintive cries and deep groans at a distance.—Moved at what I heard, I lifted up my eyes, and on the opposite side of the river, just facing us, I perceived the mountain I held so sacred, and the summit of the temple.—I observed, with surprise, that the edifice was illuminated, and innumerable multitudes covered over the mountain.—' Let us stop a moment here,'

said Nasuf, ‘ and in spite of tyranny and proscription, receive a last homage, and more affecting than any that have been paid you during your prosperity.—‘ Know,’ continued he, ‘ that ever since morning, from the instant the report of your death was spread abroad, all your true admirers, all your real friends, have successively repaired to the mountain. There, on the temple you raised, where the indigent and oppressed deposited their complaints, which you never rejected, have they deplored your loss. The great, O Barmecide, who gave you magnificent entertainments, the men on whom you conferred considerable offices, and whose fortunes are derived from your bounty, are not in the number of these votaries. The most faithful even of such description conceal themselves, and are silent, the rest already are soliciting your spoils ; but the lamentations you hear appealing to the throne of heaven issue from the heart, they come from the orphan who found you a father, from the oppressed widow you succoured, from the aged you comforted, from the work-man and artisan whose industry you encouraged, from the artist and man of letters, who are indebted to you for the display of their talents, and their glory.—In a word, in that temple of which, since your fall, and in the face of the tyrant, public gratitude has made you the divinity, eloquence and poetry are celebrating your virtues, and the people are deploring you.’ (14) ‘ O Nasuf,’ cried I, ‘ if this grateful people should again see Barmecide, if they should hear him implore their vengeance ?’—‘ Vain hope,’ interrupted Nasuf, ‘ the caliph indeed has not dared to forbid this public mourning, but he has stationed troops over the whole mountain, under pretext of maintaining order. And shall an unarmed multitude oppose them, a multitude which consists, for the most part, of old men and women, and children !’ At this I heaved a deep sigh, and turning towards the mountain, I contemplated

tempted in silence the spectacle it afforded ; I enjoyed, with transport, the felicity of creating such regret ; but the more I was affected at this, the keener I felt the sad reverse of fortune, which tore me from this beloved nation. ‘ Unfortunate people,’ cried I, ‘ you whom I carry in my heart, you are weeping at my death, and it is no illusion which afflicts you.’ ‘ Yes, Barmecide has truly ceased to exist !—he can henceforward no longer contribute to your welfare !—Barmecide is no more !’ I could not go on, my sobs choaked my utterance, and I followed Nasuf, who was proceeding on his way ; I turned my head towards the east, in order to keep the mountain as long as possible in sight ; and when I saw it began to disappear, and for ever, my heart sunk within me, I lifted up my hands towards the place, and groaned in all the bitterness of despair. It seemed as if I had been bidding an eternal adieu to felicity and glory !

“ We travelled the whole night, and during that time Nasuf related all the particulars I have mentioned, and he afterwards informed me in what manner he had continued to deceive the tyrant. When he came to me the first time, he had, in concert with the caliph, concealed round my house a party of armed men, who were to appear at an appointed signal. Nasuf had persuaded the caliph it was of the utmost importance, that the people should not be informed of this event till they had heard of my death. Aaron was sensible they would show more energy in defending, than avenging me, and he approved of the measure. Nasuf, having locked me in the vault, returned to my apartment, and there this intrepid man, this heroic friend, drew his poniard, and made a large wound in his left arm, then he sprinkled the room, my bed, my clothes, and his own, with the generous stream that issued from it, and threw a large cloke thus stained with blood into the Tigris, which ran under my window ; he then gave the expected signal,

nal, the troop of assassins rushed into the house, and all my domestics were taken into custody. Nasuf called the soldiers into my chamber; he told them he had found me in bed; that after having given me several wounds, I had sprung upon the floor, and wrapped myself up in my cloke, that having snatched the dagger from him, I had given him a wound; that at last he had overpowered and killed me near the window, and then thrown my body into the Tigris, ~~so that the people should not pay me funeral~~ in order ~~that the people should not pay me funeral~~ to honour me; and he pointed to my cloke, which was yet floating upon the water. Nasuf ordered the troops to see all my domestics out of the house; he then took the keys, and repaired to the palace; his extreme paleness and bloody garments served the more to corroborate his tale, and at the end of it, he dexterously took off the handkerchief that bound his arm without being observed by Aaron, and his wound opened afresh, and the caliph saw the blood gush out; he then no longer could doubt of the efforts I had made in my defence, or of my death. The better to secure the obedience of Nasuf, he had given him my house, and all it contained. Nasuf took occasion to observe to him, that he wished to return there to make sure of the gold, and other valuable things, which the mansion must contain, and to find some papers which the caliph wished to secure; but added, that fearing the fury of the people, who in a few moments were going to hear he had immolated their idol, he would not only avoid entering the house in the day-time, but would afterwards conceal himself, and even withdraw from the court for a while. This precaution seemed extremely natural to the caliph; he reflected a moment, and then told him that having learned from the letter which had undone me, that I had a son, he wished to have him included in the proscription of my family, and desired Nasuf to set off secretly in the night to Mecca,

and

and to take upon himself the discovery of the child. Nasuf joyfully embraced this proposal ; he returned in the evening to my house, and entered with a single slave belonging to the caliph, to whom he gave my papers, and as soon as the slave went out, he came to liberate me. He assured me the caliph had not yet taken any violent measures against Abaffa, ‘ make yourself easy,’ added he, ‘ on her account ; I have instructed her in what she must say, should she be interrogated ; I shall return to the tyrant after my journey to Mecca, he places great confidence in me, and I shall soon find means of delivering the princess, and taking our flight together, and, believe me, the happiest moment of my life will be that in which I shall restore her to your arms.’—Conceive, if it be possible, the emotions and the deep sense of gratitude which such a relation, and such promises, must have inspired in my breast.

“ A little before day-light, Nasuf put a writing into my hands which contained the itinerary of the route I had to follow. We agreed I should proceed in the night only, as long as I should continue in the tyrant’s dominions, and that when come into Europe, I should take up my residence in the country of Bavaria ; that I should assume the name of Giaffar, should wait the arrival of Abaffa and himself, and he promised to join me in the course of seven or eight months. Before we parted, he delivered to me a casket of precious stones and gold, which he had brought from my house, and he furnished me with an order signed by the caliph, and stamped with his seal, which he had received for himself ; this writing imported, that he was travelling on a secret mission, and commanded all the subjects of the caliph to receive and lodge him. With this paper I was authorized to appear without exciting suspicion by my disguise, and even to hide my face by unfolding the drapery of my turban. Nasuf informed me he had taken

taken farther precautions in favour of my journey, and when he arrived at Mecca he would write to the caliph, that he had lost this paper. It was thus that I parted from this faithful friend ; I pressed him a long time in my arms, and wept ; and when he had left me, I felt myself alone in the universe !—My journey, thanks to the ingenious forecast of Nasuf, was perfectly fortunate. Being arrived in Bavaria, I entrusted the count with my secret. In him I found the friendship of a brother, and all the discretion which my situation required ; for the life of Nasuf, and perhaps that of Abaffa, depend on the belief which prevails, that I no longer exist !—A few months after my arrival, Gerold, under pretext of some inquiries relative to the arts, dispatched one of his squires to Bagdat, with instructions to get information relative to every thing that passed there.—It is more than two years since I arrived in Europe, and I continued a long time in hopes, that Nasuf would be able to perform his promises ; but since the return of Gerold's emissary, my hopes are almost extinct. This emissary, who had been at the court of Bagdat, informed us that the nation still mourned for Barmede ; that no one knew what was become of the princess ; that some said she had sunk under her afflictions, others that she had secretly escaped into Europe ; that Nasuf was in high favour with the caliph, and possessed an immense fortune, and that residing continually in the palace, he never quitted the person of the caliph. After this report, I was but too well convinced, that Nasuf, satisfied with having been my deliverer, had not resolution enough to sacrifice his fortune and country in my behalf : I have no right, however, to complain, but this neglect of his promise condemns me to eternal obscurity !—To him am I indebted for my life, and I cannot resume my name, without exposing my benefactor to the vengeance of the tyrant ! In fine, my fears and uncertainty respecting

respecting the situation of Abaffa fill up the measure of my misfortune !—Flattering myself, however, she is actually in Europe, and that Nasuf, either through remissness, or fearful, perhaps, lest we should be again united, has not directed her to fly to the dominions of the count of Bavaria, I have been wandering for more than a year ; I endeavour to discover her steps, encouraged by a faint hope which every day still enfeebles. But to seek her is the only shadow of felicity that is left me, and to this dear occupation does my device relate, which at the same time bears allusion to the *golden herb*, that Abaffa sought after to save my life. Thus ought you now to conceive the reasons which attach me to Gerold's party. A fugitive, and a proscribed man, in him have I found not only my true sovereign, but a benefactor and a friend ; attached by gratitude, and by the tenderest amity, engaged by the communication I have made of my secret, I am forced to combat in support of a cause which seems to me unjust. But I may venture to flatter myself that my presence here will be attended with some utility ; Gerold has procured my admittance into the counsel of the confederate princes ; there I may hope to be heard, and I console myself under the necessity which obliges me to take arms, with the hopes of instigating Gerold, and the other chiefs, to pacific measures."

CHAPTER - V.

UNFORESEEN TROUBLE.

*Che incanto è la Bellezza
Ornata di virtù!*

METASTASIO.

What's female beauty, but an air divine,
Through which the mind's all gentle graces shine?
They like the sun irradiate all between,
The body charms, because the soul is seen.

YOUNG.

WHEN Barmecide had finished his story, his two friends expressed their thanks and sensibility, and prolonged their visit more than an hour. At last, after the most tender farewell, they took leave of the sage Theobald, and immediately set out to the court of the duchess of Cleves (15). Upon the road, Oliver spoke much of Barmecide; and in the misfortune of this illustrious outlaw he could see nothing to compare to his own; for Barmecide, notwithstanding the sensibility of his soul, had never experienced the fatal sway of a predominant passion; his heart, divided between ambition and love, could have been but transiently torn by violent sensations—“ In a word,” added Oliver, “ he will always derive consolation from glory, and we may conclude, from his own story, that could he ever resume the splendid name of Barmecide, he would cease to weep for Abaffa !” Ifambard approved these reflections, but soon brought back the conversation to the subject of Beatrice. This princefs engaged both his imagination and his heart; and when he perceived the towers of her castle, and the white and azure standard which waved from the top of the edifice, he experienced a sensation of joy blended with a vague disquietude, with which his heart was at the same time sadly oppressed. The vast castle of Cleves is situate on the summit of a

majestic

majestic mountain, covered with rocks, and woods, and plants of every kind ; prolific springs of purest water issue from the rocks, forming cascades and streams, which fall and meander among the cypresses and pines, and wander over flowery spots of meadow ground. An ancient and gloomy forest almost encircles the mountain, and covers more than half of it ; on the other side lies an extensive plain, watered by the Rhine (16). Arriving at the first guard, the knights declared their names, and the motives of their journey ; then, being escorted by two soldiers, they proceeded forwards. When near the castle the soldiers blew a horn, which was a signal that announced to the princess the arrival of her new defenders. Immediately an answer was given by the sound of drums and trumpets. At last having climbed the mountain, and passed all the fortifications, they came to the draw-bridge, which was instantly let down. There a crowd of squires and pages belonging to the duchess waited for the knights. They led them through several spacious courts, to the sound of military music ; all this preparation redoubled Ifambard's emotion, and when he was within a hundred paces of the flight of steps which led to the apartments of the palace, and had alighted from his steed, he experienced such violent palpitation of heart, that he was forced to lean on Oliver's arm ; who, remarking this extraordinary agitation, smiled, and almost at the same instant heaved a deep sigh, on recollecting his first interview with the unfortunate Celanira ! The embarrassment of Ifambard still increased, when he suddenly perceived, at the top of the steps, a group of ladies in the most superb dresses. One of them clothed in silver brocade, and appearing in the midst of the circle, was advanced some paces before the rest, and stood upon the brink of the steps ; one of the squires, knowing her person, informed the knights it was the princess herself (17). The knights quickened

ened their pace, and arrived at the foot of the stairs ; they could then distinctly see this celebrated duchess ; but no sooner had Isambard cast his eyes upon her, than, struck with astonishment, he started back, and looked at his unhappy friend.—Oliver, pale and trembling, and ready to faint, had his eyes cast upon the ground, and appeared motionless. The duchess observed him for a moment with some attention, then breaking silence, she addressed the two friends in a speech full of grace, and inviting them to accompany her, she entered the palace ; Isambard, who, for several minutes past, had thought of nothing but his unfortunate companion in arms, now in his turn lent him the assistance of his arm. Oliver, rousing all his resolution, resumed a calmer deportment, and mounted the stair-case. In the vestibule they met Lancelot and Angilbert, who came and embraced them ; and Lancelot addressing the two friends—“ You have seen the princess,” said he, “ and were you not much struck with the astonishing resemblance between her and the unhappy daughter of Witikind ? I blame myself for not having mentioned this to Oliver, to whom this likeness must renew the painful remembrance of a tragical scene. I thought of this during our interview, but was averse to enter into that detail in the presence of a strange knight : I intended to have told him privately, and I forgot it.” At these words Oliver stammered a few broken syllables, which Isambard hastened to interrupt, observing, that he himself had experienced equal emotion and commiseration. “ Yet,” observed Angilbert, “ it is not one of those miraculous likenesses, of which so many instances are to be found in romance ; on examining Beatrice you will find considerable difference between her and Celanira. Beatrice is not light-haired, her locks are auburn, and her eyes black, her eye-brows are much darker and larger than those of Celanira, her mouth is not so small, her long eye-lashes

lashes make her eyes appear larger, and her nose, though of the same form, is still more delicate ; but that resplendent clearness of complexion, those same looks, the like expression of candour and sensibility, a similar tone of voice, the same size, and an uncommon similitude of manners, mien, and deportment, produce an illusion which will affect you a hundred times a day, by reviving the image of the most interesting person we ever saw at the court of Charlemagne.” This conversation was interrupted by Oger the Dane, who, with some degree of confusion, came in quest of his old friends ; he dreaded their raillery, but they were not in a humour to remind him of the cottage, and to laugh at his philosophy.

It was now time to repair to the saloon, and determine upon seeing the charming Beatrice again. Oliver avoided looking at her ; Isambard gazed on her with admiration chastened by remorse : for while enraptured at the pleasure of hearing and seeing her, he considered himself as Oliver’s rival ; and if the reputation of the duchess had not long since made deep impression upon his heart, this fatal resemblance would have preserved him from any dangerous degree of amorous infection. But she had engaged his attention for more than three months past ; the perusal of the tablets had completely turned his head ; and finding her a thousand times beyond what fame had described her to be, and being well persuaded, that even a more perfect resemblance could not render Oliver faithless to the memory of Celanira, he fondly gave himself up to the enchantment of an infant passion. Isambard had a restitution to make, and, accosting the duchess, he presented her the tablets, relating in what manner they had fallen into his hands. Beatrice blushed, and requested him to keep them : “ I flatter myself,” added she, “ that in examining my conduct you will ever find it consonant with the maxims those tablets contain.” Isambard received

received the precious gift with transport ; a gift which afforded a happy presage to his love. Oliver, who had been ill at ease ever since he entered the palace, went out at the end of an hour, on pretext of visiting the fortifications. An instant after he was followed by Isambard. When they met together, a moment's silence took place, on account of their mutual embarrassment ; a last Oliver, affectionately grasping the hand of his friend, said—“ My dear Isambard, I easily perceive what is labouring in your mind.—Ah ! may the new passion, with which you are inspired, secure your felicity—’tis all the wish I have now to make.—Beatrice resembles *her*, but it is not *she* ! You understand this, and the distinction ought to be sufficient to remove all your apprehensions.” “ It is true,” returned Isambard, “ that I have an enthusiastic admiration for Beatrice, and perhaps I shall soon be deeply enamoured with her ; but it will be without hope, for how can I encourage any ? In a word, I have devoted my life to thee, and never shall I form any projects inconsistent with that sacred engagement.”—Oliver pressed his friend’s hand, and was unable to make reply ; when some knights approaching them at this moment put an end to the conversation.

In the afternoon Lancelot presented the two friends to the principal ladies of the court. Isambard was mostly struck with the beauty of the charming Delia, the favourite of Beatrice. This young damsel, who was only sixteen, was as remarkable for her candour and modesty as for the brilliancy of her person. Far from being elated with pride at this favour, she kept herself continually at a distance. On all occasions she sought the lowest place, and shunned every distinction. Admirations and praise seemed to astonish and embarrass her. The simplicity of her dress, the engaging pensiveness of her looks, and unalterable sweetness of her temper, imparted an interest to her whole

whole person, which carried every thing before it. In fine, she afforded an instance, extremely novel in a court, of a favourite possessed of humility and diffidence, devoid of all ambition, without ceremony, or pretensions, and meddling with nothing. Isambard met with great pleasure the fair Amalberga, who was attached to Delia by the tenderest ties of friendship. He talked with her of Charlemagne, and the virtuous Amalberga could not hear the praises of that hero with indifference. At night the two friends were shown to their apartments ; there they found arms of precious workmanship, rich mantles of purple hue lined with ermine, and other costly gifts, with which they were presented by Beatrice (18). Isambard, who usually did not go to Oliver's room before half after eleven, observed, among the squires and pages who had brought the presents into his chamber, one of the latter, who was less than the rest, whose appearance was charming, but whose features he could not well distinguish, because he kept at a distance, and in the dark, and concealed himself behind the others. When they were all gone out, the little page remained in the room, and shutting the door, he then advanced up to Isambard, who, looking steadfastly at him, immediately recognised Arnoflede ; but no longer was it in his eyes the dangerous Arnoflede, whom he had found so charming a little while before ; he was become acquainted with her artifices and all the baseness of her conduct, and she could now only excite indignation and contempt. After having eyed her from head to foot with the greatest indifference—" May I venture to ask, madam," said he, " what is the object of this masquerade ?"—This question, and the cold manner in which it was uttered, entirely disconcerted the lady. However, soon resuming her wonted audacity, she replied, that in order to avoid the persecution of Adalgise, she had taken refuge in the castle ; that she had not

not confided her secret to any one ; had obtained the office of page about the person of the princess, but had no particular employment assigned her, and therefore she was not obliged to live with the other pages, or to appear in public ; she added, that the certainty of meeting Isambard here had induced her to make choice of this asylum ; and she finished her story with protestations of gratitude and friendship. During the narration, Isambard, leaning in a negligent manner against the chimney-piece, heard her with indifference, and without making any interruption ; when she had done speaking—“ I cannot make a better return to your confidence, madam,” said he, “ than by giving you two useful pieces of advice. The first, that you carefully avoid the presence of Oliver ; for should he meet you, I shall take upon myself to spare him the horror of seeing you a second time, by informing the princess who you are, that she may no longer give an asylum to vice. What I next recommend relates to prince Adalgise : you have, madam, a very easy way to escape his persecutions ; instead of having recourse to falsehood and disguise, at once give up all imposture ; relate to him, without deceit, the principal incidents of your life, and you will quickly see him blush at his ridiculous constancy.” During this discourse, Armoflede, quite confounded and motionless, recollecting with terror the fatal prediction of the virtuous Meinrad ; all pale and trembling, she was on the point of fainting away. At length, falling into a chair : “ O heavens,” said she, “ is this a French knight ? Is it Isambard who thus treats a woman, that has just been giving him a proof of the most unsuspicious confidence !” This reproach was ill founded, but it touched the delicacy of the generous Isambard : “ Yes, madam,” returned he, “ I acknowledge all the decorums due to your sex, and you yourself are able to bear evidence of it. We owe the profoundest respect to all virtuous women, or

to all who appear so, and such we ought always to suppose them ; for being born to protect and defend the sex, we feel the necessity of giving them our esteem. But when we have evident proofs of their perverseness, we are exonerated from our attentions, and they can only pretend to our succour, which weakness and misfortune have ever a right to claim. Thus, madam, is it, that I have already combated for you, and that I should still be ready to render you the same services if you had occasion for them (19)." " At the time you mention," returned Armoſlede, " you seemed prejudiced against me indeed, but were far from expressing that hatred and horror which appear now to govern you ; what then have I done since that period ?" " Excuse me, madam, from entering into superfluous explanations." " What !" cried Armoſlede, vehemently, " when you accuse me of being a monster, when you treat me with the most provoking contempt, you refuse to inform me what are my crimes ! You condemn me without hearing, do you call that justice ? Would you act in this way with a man, who could call you to an account for the outrage ? Is it thus you respect the weakness of which you pretend to be the protector ?" " Well, madam," answered Ifambard, " since our interview, I have learned the whole story of the unhappy Oliver." Upon this Armoſlede, obliging Ifambard to listen to her, endeavoured to palliate her crime, in protesting she had never been able to believe that Diaulas was really the brother of Celanira ; she supported this falsehood, and many others, by a flood of tears. Ifambard was not affected, yet he became a little softened. " Calm yourself, madam," said he, " and, for heaven's sake, let us put an end for ever to this fatal subject ; conduct yourself here with prudence, and, above all, avoid the sight of Oliver, and be assured of my discretion. But let this interview be our last ; you will never make me alter
my

my opinion or sentiments ; and I am now going to confess what will prove to you, that, in spite of all your charms, you have totally ceased to appear dangerous to me. You were the earliest object of my love ; I first saw you on your return from Lombardy ; your graces, your gaiety, your talents, turned my head. Almost at the same time I heard of your engagements with Oliver, and I then avoided you with the utmost care. The sentiments I felt for you being checked on their birth did not grow into a passion, but hindered me from giving reception to another, and cost me a long and severe combat !”—“ What,” returned Armoflede, “ and you have loved me ! You must indeed be well cured of your flame, to be able to make such a declaration.” Armoflede now cast her looks on the ground, and remained in silence, and a tear or two escaping from her eye-lids crept softly down her cheek. Isambard began to feel a painful sensation at the bottom of his heart, which seemed like compassion. Armoflede arose—“ Farewell, seignior,” said she, “ my giddy head has led me into many an error ; but if bitter regret and sorrowful contrition can make any reparation, this evening has expiated them all.” On saying this, she advanced towards the door, when the good knight, seeming quite at a loss, and relenting of his harshness, followed her in a respectful manner, as if he wished to bring her back : Armoflede put her hand to the latch of the door, and turning towards Isambard—“ Farewell then for ever !” said she, “ and at least be assured, that in spite of your hatred”—“ My hatred !” cried he, “ can you believe”—An inexpressible embarrassment prevented his going on with the sentence ; he took hold of the pretty hand he saw laid upon the latch, and when he felt that hand within his own, his embarrassment still increased ; he would fain make reparation by politeness, for a scene which he thought he had carried too far ; he was fearful of showing anything

thing like gallantry ; he durst not speak, yet was aware how ridiculous it was to continue silent. This perplexity gave him an air of constraint and irresolution, which Armoſlede took for tender emotion : at length, very fortunately for Isambard, the voice of his squire was heard in the anti-chamber, when Armoſlede, pulling down her hat over her eyes, opened the door, and hastily went away.

CHAPTER VI.

A COUNCIL OF STATE.

L'avis du plus grand nombre est souvent moins bon.

THE next morning, as Isambard was walking out with Lancelot, and going along a spacious gallery, he passed by a chamber in which he heard music. He stopped, and listened to a charming voice which sung the following ballad, accompanied by a lute.

They say I'm in love with PHILENE !
 O heav'n's ! how my case they mistate !
 Whate'er I may feel for that swain
 Is not LOVE—it is liker to HATE.
 I blush when I see him—I do—
 His preſence still gives me diftres ;
 Yet, the more I think on him, 'tis true,
 I perceive—that I hate him the leſs.

If Phillis fay aught in his praiſe,
 Be it ever fo trivial and flight,
 Ah ! how my poor foul it affrays ;
 And fills it with ire and despight.
 To love him 's a crime, in my view ;
 And yet I must freely confes,
 That the more I think on him, 'tis true,
 I perceive—that I hate him the leſs.

THE KNIGHTS OF

Of all the fair nymphs of the plain
 Letitia was dearest to me—
 Letitia's in love with PHILENE—
 Letitia with horror I see :
 My envy I cannot subdue,
 My jealousy cannót suppress :
 And the more I think on him, 'tis true,
 I perceive—that *I hate him the less.*

If he ask me to dance, in the grove,
 With reluctance I tender my hand :
 Is this any token of love,
 When I stagger, and scarcely can stand ?
 Palpitations and pantings ensue,
 The cause I'm unable to guess :
 But the more I think on him, 'tis true,
 I perceive—that *I hate him the less.*

While musing, a few days ago,
 I met him alone in a mead ;
 I ne'er was so flutter'd, I know ;
 I turn'd me, and suddenly fled.
 Yet, alas ! though I fled from his view,
 I could not my feelings repress ;
 And the more I think on him, 'tis true,
 I perceive—that *I hate him the less.*

Ah ! why should sensations so keen
 Lay hold on so youthful a heart ?
 Ah ! why should a girl, not fifteen,
 Endure so tormenting a smart ?
 A smart which I cannot eschew ;
 For his absence augments my distress :
 And the more I think on him, 'tis true,
 I perceive—that *I hate him the less.*

But, be it *aversion*—or *wbim*,
 My Reason it ne'er shall disgrace ;
 I will ever do justice to HIM :
 He's the flow'r of the swains of the place.

Perhaps my aversion may cease,
Perhaps there's a cure for my pain;
I feel it already decrease—
Ah! how can I hate such a swain?

After the song was over, the two knights continued their walk. “The young person you have just heard,” said Lancelot, “is in love with one of the princess’s pages, and upon that passion, which she herself does not seem to understand, Angilbert composed the song, and gave it to her. The words she finds so expressive of her own feelings, that she takes delight in singing it every day; but do you know who the little page is, who thus turns her head? It is Armoſlede in disguise, and who is only known here by Angilbert, Oger, and me. She has been amusing herself till she has an opportunity of making more brilliant conquests, in creating mischief among the maids of honour of the princess; but Beatrice has disapproved of this intrigue, and the apartment of the young ladies has been shut against her for a fortnight past.” “And how long has Armoſlede been here?” demanded Ifambard. “She came with Oger,” replied Lancelot, “about three weeks ago.” This answer made Ifambard laugh; but he thought it proper to inform Lancelot, that Oliver, having quarrelled with Armoſlede, had great reason to detest her, and he would do right not to speak of her in his presence. Lancelot promised to mention this to Angilbert. “He will not be astonished at this rupture,” added he, “for he has never believed the public report, that they were married, or that Armoſlede was indeed worthy of becoming the wife of Oliver.”

During this interview, Lancelot informed Ifambard, that he was going in an hour’s time to the camp of the allied princes, to carry the last proposals of peace from the duchess. Lancelot, departing, repaired to Gerold’s tent; he met the sage Theobald,

who was waiting for him there, and the knight, and the venerable old man, acquitted themselves of their mission. The count listened to them with calmness, and replied, that he should assemble a council of the princes, and there deliberate upon the duchess's offers ; " but I believe," added Gerold, " that they will be judged insincere ; it is imagined, that so many valiant warriors, as now compose the court of Beatrice, are far from inspiring her with pacific sentiments ; their interests perhaps are opposite to ours ; the pretensions of the king of Pannonia, for instance, are sufficiently known, and should Beatrice consult him, he would not counsel her to offer peace upon such conditions as we could accept." " Seignior," replied Lancelot, " I am not acquainted with the projects of Theudon, but I know, that the princess consults only her reason and her duty. I know besides, that all the knights, who are armed in her defence, are fearless of war, but have no interests which make them desire it. They have all given proofs of their prowess in the field of honour, and no new exploits can increase the brilliant reputation of the Knights of the Swan, Oger, the Dane, the brave Angilbert, and the sons of duke Aimon ; in fine, seignior, I can assure you, that you have many true admirers at the court of Beatrice, and that the person who appears to have the greatest share of her favour, far from being against you, openly professes the warmest attachment for you." " And who may that person be ?" returned Gerold : " It is the bosom friend of Beatrice," answered Lancelot, " the young and beauteous Delia, who was born, she says, in your dominions ; and all her vows are in behalf of her sovereign ; and if the duchess followed her advice in that respect, your wishes, seignior, would soon be gratified." At these words, Gerold being surprised and touched, asked a thousand questions concerning Delia : Lancelot, who was passionately enamoured

amoured with her, answered in a manner that appeared greatly to interest the count of Bavaria ; and during the rest of the conference there was no question of any thing but the charming Delia. After Lancelot had retired, Gerold called an assembly of the princes ; a grand council was held, and Barmecide was admitted a member. Gerold read the proposals of Beatrice : she declared her resolution to remain free ; that violent measures would never induce her to make choice of a husband ; but that she wished for peace, and offered to pay the expence of all the preparations of war. Hartrad, count of Thuringia, who had long been smitten with a violent passion for Beatrice, first began to speak. He maintained, that peace on such conditions could not be accepted without dishonour ; and that the allied princes would become an object of ridicule in the eyes of all Europe, if, after the fame of this enterprise, they should ingloriously retreat without compelling the duchess to choose one among them for a husband. Henry, duke of Friuli, who also loved Beatrice, was of the same opinion. The duke of Spoletto was almost the only person who appeared inclined to peace. Gerold combated his sentiments in a long speech, equally artful and eloquent, and endeavoured to prove, that mere policy, independent of all private interest, should lead them to reject the proposals of the duchess. Barmecide then requested leave to speak. After having drawn a striking picture of the dreadful evils of war ; “ when we reflect,” said he, “ on these terrible calamities, every passion ought to subside, and the voice of humanity, to suppress those of ambition, resentment, and love. It is said dishonour would attend the acceptance of the proposed peace.—When a prince submits to humiliating conditions, when he concludes a treaty contrary to the interests and rights of his subjects, then it is that he makes a dishonourable peace ; but when nothing is required of him that can

can prove prejudicial to his nation, he commits a crime in continuing hostilities, and will alone be responsible for the blood that shall be shed. I will go farther, and observe, that should an enemy demand an equitable restitution, a prince ought to make it, and thereby expiate the crime of usurpation, for such may all conquest be considered. But in the present case there is no question of these great sacrifices. The duchess of Cleves, affording a noble example of moderation, demands peace of the aggressors, and tenders them her treasures to spare the blood of her subjects. Should this be refused, with what ardour will they combat in her cause ? And as for ourselves, can we depend upon the zeal of our troops ? Have they their homes to defend ? What interest have they in the war ? they are only to experience the fatigues and dangers of it. And of what avail is the valour and ability of the chiefs, when the soldiers are discontented and murmur ? Their enthusiasm it is which produces victory ; and discouragement and dismay will prevail in our camp, while the energy of the besieged will multiply both their resources and successes. Upon your decision depends the fate of that multitude of men which composes the two armies. Our tents, extended along the foot of these hills, have already struck terror into the minds of the peaceful inhabitants of this fine country ; with a single word you may dispel all their alarms. Ah ! turn your eyes towards those fertile fields which surround you ; look at those cottages, the respectable abodes of innocence ; behold that flourishing army ; and consider, that in rejecting peace you pronounce a sanguinary sentence, the prompt and terrible execution of which will every where carry devastation and death. Those cottages, those villages, will be burned and destroyed, those fields will be desolated, those soldiers, now so showy and alert, will be massacred, and at your command too ; for all these evils, all these cruelties, will be
your

your own work. — And in tribunals, instituted for the punishment of crimes, shall the judge be unable to pronounce sentence upon the vilest wretches without repugnance, while princes, assembled in council, shall coolly consign thousands of innocent men to death ! — Yes, I will ever maintain, that defensive war alone can be reasonable and just ; and where peace can either be accepted or proposed, a declaration of war is the most horrid of crimes. Even success cannot diminish its atrocity in the eyes of rational and compassionate beings, for true glory is inseparable from moderation, justice, and humanity.”

This speech gave rise to the most violent debates ; Hartrad, and the duke of Friuli, who felt themselves particularly pointed at, expressed the most violent resentment against Barmecide : and being ignorant of the real name of that great man, and considering him only as the obscure Giaffar ; they replied with disdain and anger. Barmecide retorted with all his natural spirit ; but Gerold put an end to this dispute by observing, that if liberty of opinion were not allowed, it was useless to summon a council. “ In this respect,” said he, “ I may be permitted to offer myself as an example ; two of the dearest friends I have in this assembly are the duke of Spoleto and Giaffar ; both of them differ with me in opinion, and I am not incensed against them. They have spoken conscientiously, and have done their duty : ours is now to weigh their reasons, and duly to reflect upon them. I therefore propose, that nothing be decided upon with precipitation ; that the duchies be informed, that we shall maturely examine her proposals before we make reply ; and that we desire that the truce, which expires the day after to-morrow, should be prolonged another month. During this time, new ideas and new negotiations may bring about a pacification, and especially as in that interval the prince of Greece will certainly arrive at our camp, and that new reinforce-

ment will facilitate a treaty of peace." This proposal was combated by Hartrad and the duke of Friuli; but every other member of the council adopted it, and it was carried by a plurality of voices. The council immediately named two deputies, commissioned to carry their decision to the princess. Beatrice chose to receive the deputies in the presence of all the knights who defended her cause; she accepted their proposals, and consented to the prolongation of the truce.

An hour after the departure of the deputies, the arrival of Barmecide was announced; as the princess had made a rule never to grant a private audience to the warriors from the enemy's camp, Barmecide could only see her in the midst of her court. Being admitted into her presence, he informed her, that the count of Bavaria, having heard that one of her ladies was a native of his dominions, was desirous of making some inquiries concerning her. "Seignior," replied Beatrice, "it is proper that Delia herself should gratify the curiosity of her sovereign in that respect: you shall see her; you shall instantly be conducted to her apartment; but as intrigue has never found its way into this castle, all mystery is banished; all our proceedings are public, because our intentions are all upright and pure; I am in the midst of my friends and defenders, and unlimited confidence is the least proof of gratitude which I can give them. My friendship for Delia, and your attachment to the count of Bavaria, may bring suspicion upon a secret interview. To avoid therefore all false interpretations, you will permit, seignior, that the knights who are here present may be witness to this interview, and I request them to accompany you." At these words Barmecide bowed low, and withdrew. The Knights of the Swan, Lancelot, Roger, young Guichard, and some others, attended them to Delia's apartment. When Barmecide was gone out of

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the saloon, he turned towards Oliver, and taking him by the arm, "There," said he, "is a princess of twenty years old, whose policy is worthy the imitation of all the sovereigns of the earth ;—we should then see no more revolutions." "Yes," replied Oliver, "*goodness, equity, uprightness,* such is the secret of the great art of government, and Beatrice possesses these qualities." "I am fearful," returned Barmecide, "lest this secret, which is so simple and excellent, should be lost with her ; at least for a long while." While he was thus speaking, they found themselves at Delia's door, and Barmecide entered with the other knights. Delia was alone, and employed in reading ; she was much surprised at seeing so numerous a company : Barmecide approached, and informed her, that the count of Bavaria was desirous of knowing in what part of his dominions she was born. "That prince," added Barmecide, "has been highly flattered on hearing of the interest you take in his situation. He laments on reflecting that misfortunes, or perhaps injustice, to which he is a stranger, have probably driven you from your native country ; he makes you a tender of his friendship, madam, and of his protection and influence in favour of your relations, should you have any in his dominions." During this discourse the meek and timid Delia changed countenance several times, and nearly fainted away.—She replied, with a low and tremulous voice, that she did not, neither ought she to complain ; that she was an orphan ; that the goodness of the princess rendered her situation as happy as it could be made ; and she added, on casting down her eyes, that she should ever offer up the most ardent vows to heaven for the happiness of her sovereign. "Well, madam," returned Barmecide, "your sovereign is entitled to present you with a slight acknowledgment of his gratitude, since he is deprived of the pleasure of affording an asylum to a person of your worth, at least

you will not refuse these pledges of his esteem and friendship, which he has commissioned me to offer you." Then Barmecide, causing his squires to come forward, took from them an open basket, adorned with green ribbands, and filled with trinkets and jewels, and placed it on the table before her. Delia coloured, and heaved a deep sigh. "These splendid ornaments," said she, "would ill become me; but, seignior, I shall receive with respect and thankfulness this green ribband; it is the colour of the count of Bavaria, and is the only one of his gifts I can accept." On saying this Delia took off a broad ribband from the basket, and tied it round her waist. Barmecide in vain endeavoured to prevail upon her to retract her refusal. Delia persisted in it with firmness; Barmecide took back the gifts, and observed as he went out, that the favourite was, in her way, in every respect, as extraordinary a character as the princess.

CHAPTER VII.

THE MYSTERIOUS DWELLING.

Non e prudenza
Ma follia de' mortali
L'arte crudel di presagirsi i mali.
Sempre e maggior del vero
L'idea d'una sventura,
Al credulo pensiero,
Dipinta dal timor.
Chi stolto il mal figura,
Affretta il proprio affanno;
Ed afficura un danno;
Quando e dubioso ancor.

METASTASIO.

Un noir dessein se forme à l'ombre du mystère.

PRADON.

ISAMBARD, still recollecting with great concern the story of the unhappy Azoline, which Ordalia had related,

related, was now convinced that Roger was, in fact, the lover of that unfortunate lady ; he often observed him colour and tremble, when he had purposely mentioned the name of Rotbold in his presence. Thus persuaded, he proposed a walk into the forest with him ; and when they were out of the castle, he observed he had wished to speak to him in private, in order to justify the memory of an innocent person, whom he doubtless considered as culpable. This preface, which announced the death of Azoline, made Roger start ! he beseeched Isambard to explain himself, and the Knight of the Swan related the sad adventure of that lady. Roger, who during this narrative was alternately afflicted with sorrow, and transported with rage, shed a flood of tears, and engaged himself, under the most terrible oaths, to avenge the death of the unhappy Azoline, by immolating her barbarous oppreessor, and the infamous Tryphon, his accomplice.—“ Alas !” cried Roger, “ the crime of these monsters have rendered me guilty myself. I have calumniated virtue ; I accused the innocent Azoline ; contempt and indignation had cured me of hopeless love ; while she was dying in uttering my name, I was complaining of her infidelity and perfidy ; nor did I know my fatal error till it was no longer in my power to make expiation !” Isambard, deeply affected at Roger’s despair, shared his affliction, and felt, that of all the movements of the soul pity is the strongest and promptest inducement to friendship. He promised to see him every day in private, to hear his complaints, and soothe his regret. Roger knew how to value such a friend, and his acquisition afforded him the greatest consolation he was capable of receiving. As they were walking along the skirts of the forest, Isambard observed a small house at a distance, at the foot of a hill, standing entirely by itself ; he had been for an hour past extremely thirsty, and was desirous of stopping a moment at this house in

in order to drink. The knights repaired thither, and finding the door half opened, they entered the house. After passing through a kind of vestibule, they came into a room which was decently furnished ; a little maid servant thirteen or fourteen years old was sitting alone before a large furnace, upon which was placed a still. Above the furnace was a shelf full of bottles, of various coloured liquors. "This," said Isambard, "must be the dwelling of some chemist ; but truly he has made choice of a very retired and wild situation. "Is your master at home?" demanded Roger; "I have no master," answered she, "the person on whom I wait is a woman." "It is singular," said Isambard, "and will not your mistress then see any body?" "O, yes, people come after her, but not so often as formerly ; we have seen hardly anybody for a fortnight past, but the little page?"—"What page?"—"The pretty little page from the castle ; I don't know his name. They who come here scarce ever mention who they are." "But," interrupted Roger, "tell us, I beg of you, the name of your mistress."—"Marcelina," said the girl.—"Ah ! let us go hence," cried Roger instantly, "you must not quench your thirst in this house ; let us begone." On saying this, he took Isambard by the arm and led him out, without waiting his reply. When they got into the forest, Isambard questioned Roger upon what had just passed. "This Marcelina," answered he, "is an old woman, who is thought by the people of the country to be a sorceress ; and, according to all appearances, she deals in poisons. She pretends to practise chemistry, to foretel events, to prepare charms and philters ; it is said she conjures up departed souls, and forces the dead from their tombs ; but it seems evident enough, that she has a fatal power over the living, for it is known, that two persons have lately perished by drinking her potions. The prince, who is averse to the very appearance of despotism,

despotism, does not banish her from the country ; but the old woman has been indicted upon several accusations, and prosecution is going forward against her : but this will be a tedious affair, because the humanity of the laws allows the accused person very extensive measures of defence in matters of a criminal nature.” Isambard, on reflecting upon this adventure, imagined the pretty little page, of whom the servant had spoken, might be Armoisfede ; and the idea of her secret propensity to these vile superstitions increased the contempt he already conceived for her.

On going out of the forest, the knights entered an extensive plain. Isambard observed with surprise a large and open tent, which the workmen had just been erecting, and inquiring of Roger if he knew for what it was intended ; “ All I am acquainted with,” replied the knight, “ is, that the princess is to appear there to-morrow ; that all her troops, and the inhabitants of the canton, are invited to attend her. The duchess has informed us, that she will not declare her intentions but in presence of all the people assembled together. We suppose she means to make a speech relative to the persecution she suffers.” This explanation deeply interested Isambard, and he waited for the morrow with extreme impatience.

CHAPTER VIII.

A VIRTUOUS AND ENLIGHTENED PRINCESS.

Toute puissance vient de Dieu, et tout ce qui vient de Dieu, n'est établie que pour l'utilité des hommes; les grands seroient inutiles sur la terre, s'il ne s'y trouvoit des pauvres et des malheureux. Ils ne doivent leur élévation qu'aux besoins publics; et loin que les peuples soient faits pour eux, ils ne sont eux-mêmes tout ce qu'ils sont, que pour les peuples.

MASSILLON.

La prevention du peuple en faveur des grands est si aveugle, que s'ils s'avisoient d'être bons, cela iroit à l'idolatrie.

LA BRUYERE.

THE next morning, at ten o'clock, the duchess of Cleves gave notice to all the knights, that she was going to the plain: it was in the month of November; but the air was as soft and serene as in one of the finest days of autumn; the princess was dressed with remarkable elegance and simplicity, and her person never before appeared to such advantage. Attended by all the knights and ladies of the court, she arrived at the appointed place. The whole plain was covered with people, who for two hours had been waiting for the appearance of their sovereign; the moment they saw her, the sky resounded with shouts of joy, acclamation, and applause. Beatrice requested the splendid train which accompanied her, to stop for a moment; when, leaving the circle which surrounded her, she advanced alone upon the plain, and mixed in the crowd that idolized her. Every one pressed forward to look at her, but at the same time was fearful of thronging her; at length they made an opening, and she passed through the multitude to the tent, but with a slow pace, and frequently stopping to speak with those who were near her, and beholding

beholding them all with looks expressive of tenderness and gratitude. When she approached the tent, the crowd stood still. Beatrice, turning towards them, observed, that the fineness of the day rendering the tent useless, she was averse to go into it, but that having occasion to harangue them, she rather wished to have the stage removed from it into the open air, in order to be heard by all present. This was instantly done; and the knights being now arrived, all, without distinction of rank, ranged themselves around the princess. Theudon, however, with Isambard and the youngest of the sons of Aimon, found means to place themselves very near her. Oliver, who was at a greater distance, could not see her; but Beatrice had him called, observing to Isambard, that she wished him not to be separated from his friend. Oliver came forwards, and placed himself beside Isambard. Deep silence prevailed, and the princess expressed herself in the following terms: "I have been two years sovereign of this country; and I may venture to flatter myself, that I have added to its prosperity and happiness; but of this I do not vainly boast. Young, and without experience, I could only claim the merit of blameless sentiments and upright intentions. I wanted knowledge, but I was sensible of my deficiency; I sought after wise counsels, and weighed them with a degree of reason, which nothing has yet been able to corrupt. My love for the public welfare has stood me in the stead of talents; and in that tender and sublime sentiment consist the wisdom and genius of sovereigns. To my respectable preceptor, to the sage Theobald, am I indebted for my principles, and my notions of real glory; and to him you owe the institutions and new laws which secure your liberty, and consequently your happiness. From him I learned, in my infancy, that unjust prerogatives are less degrading to those who grant them, than dishonourable to such as retain them. He has taught

me, that it is a noble task to govern a people who think, and who are sensible of their rights ; for such only can judge of the conduct of their chief ; such only can estimate virtue, and dispense glory, by their approbation and love ; while the praises and obedience of slaves evince only their own baseness and fears. He taught me, too, that one of the most important duties of a sovereign is to avoid war, and to submit to the greatest sacrifices for the preservation of peace. Judge then of the sorrow I now feel on account of the powerful league which is formed against me. The confederate princes insist, that I should make choice of a husband among them ; but the injustice and violence of their conduct sufficiently show, that were I to yield to their requisition, I should give you a tyrant to reign over you ; and that sole consideration is enough to induce me to persist in my refusal. Finding, therefore, that war is inevitable, I have been reflecting upon the evils it will bring upon you, and not being able to support that dreadful prospect, I have taken, for some time past, the resolution I am now going to make known to you. Ambition, and the desire of reigning over this fine country, have chiefly instigated the princes to appear in arms against me ; if Beatrice did not possess the duchy of Cleves, there would be no contest to obtain her hand. My rank I only value as far as it is conducive to your welfare ; and happy should I be to renounce it, to secure the public tranquillity."—Here a thousand confused and mournful cries interrupted Beatrice. "No, no," exclaimed the crowd from every quarter, "*we will live, and, if it be necessary, die for Beatrice!*"—These acclamations were accompanied by moans and sobs ; and the troops of the princess, who had mingled with the crowd by her orders, unarmed like the rest of the people, lifted up their helmets, and cried out, "*We will deliver you from your persecutors ; we promise you victory ; we swear*

to keep our words.”—All the people repeated the vow, and exclaimed, “*And we also will fight; we will all of us take arms.*” This universal enthusiasm touched the hearts of the knights, who were spectators of this moving spectacle, and they united their voices to the acclamations of the people and soldiers. The tender-hearted Isambard could not restrain his tears: Oliver had hitherto, according to custom, refrained from looking at the princess, but being deeply affected at her speech, and, above all, at the sound of her voice, he turned his face towards her, and burst into tears. In her he wished to contemplate the splendid triumph of goodness and virtue. How graceful does glory appear, when attended by youth and beauty!—This was the first time that Oliver ventured to gaze on that enchanting face, which recalled to his mind so dear and so mournful a remembrance. Admiration held in suspense every other sentiment; but meeting a look from her, he started!—he thought he beheld Celenira!—This look had the same expression.—The wretched Oliver, bewildered and dismayed, cried, “O heavens! what new kind of punishment!”—and he cast down his eyes all streaming with tears. Fortunately the tumult was too great, and the agitation too universal, to allow his distress to be particularly observed. At length Beatrice making a sign that she wished to speak, silence again prevailed. After having expressed her gratitude, and how deeply she was affected, she begged to be heard to the end of her speech without any interruption, and she thus went on: “It was not my intention to declare any fixed or hasty resolution; I was only desirous of making a proposal, and offering you my advice. You are free, and I am not: Providence, in having placed me in the rank I fill, has consigned me an employment which I cannot quit without your concurrence; an employment, of which you would have the right to deprive me, if I became unjust or tyrannical. Thus

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am I yours ; to you are my days devoted, and you alone can dispose of me ; but before you reject the measures I recommend, let me intreat you to give them your most serious consideration ; I have taken due precautions : having no heir, I have thought it would be advantageous to you to pass under the dominion of the most powerful and most virtuous monarch in Europe. I have founded Charlemagne upon the occasion ; and if you will accept my abdication, that great prince will become your sovereign ; or if you rather prefer a republican government, he will be your protector and ally ; the choice will belong to yourselves : for my own part, I believe, with the sage Theobald, that a perfect government cannot exist, because it is impossible to fix the inclinations of men, or to limit their desires, and because there must be chiefs ; and the ambition of those chiefs will always overturn the most sublime institutions, or render them of no avail. But if it be true, that peace and tranquillity are the best of blessings, monarchical government, founded upon laws, would perhaps prove the best of all, were the subjects and the sovereigns once convinced of this grand truth, *that the people have always the right and the power to depose tyrants* (20). However, do not imagine that personal alarms, or any selfish motive, have induced me to renounce the noble occupation of governing you ; my glory is to render you happy, and I desire your welfare with an earnestness that will insure the success of my endeavours. Your love, your courage, and the valour and talents of these generous knights who are come to my succour, are certain pledges of victory ; but what tears will that triumph cost me ! Will it console me for the lives that must be lost ?—Ah ! suffer me to give up a pre-eminence which exposes you to such dangers ; I shall not abandon a country which is so dear to me ; I will continue to live among you in willing obscurity ; and when I see you peaceable and happy, I shall have made

made no sacrifice ; I shall have given up nothing." — Here the duchess, much affected, left off speaking, and put both her hands up to her face. — " *May Beatrice be always our sovereign!*" cried the people with transport. This general acclamation was a thousand times repeated with the liveliest enthusiasm, and the applause were redoubled. The people then intreated the princess to promise them to wave her intentions. Beatrice lifted up her hands, and made the vows they required ; then did their expressions of joy and gratitude and love rise to a pitch of intoxication and idolatry. After this, the people cut down large branches of trees, of which they formed a litter, and prevailing on the princess to seat herself thereon, they bore her in triumph to her palace in the midst of the acclamations and shouts of the multitude. In public admiration there is a kind of infection, from which it is almost impossible to preserve ourselves, at least for the moment, even when it is usurped ; but when reason approves, and envy cannot attack it, there arises from it a sensation perhaps of the strongest nature the human heart is capable of experiencing. Whatever might be the degree of admiration, when we admire alone, the mind can remain composed ; but public and universal plaudits, the charm and splendour of glory, exalt admiration and enthusiasm to a supreme degree. — All the knights, those even who were not in love with the duchess, were seized with this irresistible emotion ; and when they were returned to the palace, Lancelot, who was in a corner of the saloon by the side of Oliver, spoke to him, in raptures, of the scene which had just passed before their eyes. " I must confess to you," said he, " that had I been obliged to declare the kind of sensation the duchess then inspired me with, I should have answered very naturally, and with great truth, that I adored her ; and yet I love another, and passionately too. My mind, however, being now composed, I feel nothing farther

farther for Beatrice than admiration and the tenderest attachment; but the fascinating glory with which I saw her surrounded, I must confess, contributes to render her still more interesting in my estimation. Before this day, I was sufficiently convinced of her merit; yet we feel the value of virtue with greater force, after having enjoyed the happiness of seeing it crowned. At these words Oliver sighed, and, after a moment's silence, "Yes," said he, "the spectacle, to which we have been witnesses, cannot but leave a deep impression upon our minds." On saying this, he arose in an absent manner, drew nearer to the duchess, an instant afterwards changed his place, and at length went out of the room.

CHAPTER IX.

*A QUEEN WITHOUT UNDERSTANDING, AND
ILL-ADVISED.*

L'Anglois indépendant et libre autant que brave,
Des caprices de cour ne fut jamais esclave,
Nous ne l'avons point vu régler, jusqu'à ce jour,
Sur la faveur des rois, sa haine ou son amour.
Contre un tel préjugé, son ame est aguerrie,
Souvent contre le trône il défend la patrie.

Warwick. Tragédie de MR. DE LA HARPE.

THIS day, which was so glorious for the duchess of Cleves, increased both the love and admiration of Isambard. He observed, with secret delight, that the princess treated his two rivals, Theudon, and the bashful Guichard, with studied and distant politeness, while her behaviour to the other knights, and particularly to himself, was less reserved, and full of courtesy. Already he began to discover, that he had incurred the hatred of the king of Pannonia;

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he attributed his sudden aversion to jealousy ; and, by degrees, his heart prompted him to encourage the most endearing hope. Beatrice was seated between Amalberga and Delia ; Isambard, Lancelot, Angilbert, Archambald, and some other knights, formed a half-circle, just opposite those three persons. Angilbert had just been reading a copy of verses, which he had composed for Beatrice ; but, all on a sudden, the princess, falling into a deep reverie, took no farther part in the conversation. In a few minutes, however, she resumed her discourse, and, changing the topic, spoke of the court of France, and asked Isambard many questions on that subject. She then enquired of him, if he really observed that striking resemblance between her and the unhappy daughter of Witikind, which the French knights, and Oger the Dane, reported. This question, though very natural, surprised Isambard, and gave him an uneasiness, for which he was at a loss to account ; he replied, that the likeness was indeed extraordinary. Upon this, Beatrice asked a multitude of questions respecting Celanira ; and, entering into the minutest particulars concerning her, she was desirous of knowing in what manner she was dressed on her first appearance at court ; she was told, that the princess for some time wore the dress of her country ; and the duchess requested an exact description of the Saxon garb ; at this moment, Oliver entered the room ; and Beatrice immediately began to talk on another subject. Oliver, according to his custom, placed himself in a remote corner of the saloon ; he rarely came near the duchess, and never addressed his conversation to her. She, on her part, spoke but little to him, and seemed to respect and lament his deep melancholy. The French knights had questioned Isambard upon the grief of his friend. Isambard ascribed it to his rupture with Armoſlede ; he had even

spoken

spoken of it to Oger the Dane, and censured his attachment to so contemptible an object ; but Oger, quite deluded, and more in love than ever, being at length persuaded beyond all doubt, that his Aminta was Armoſlede, considered that all her crime was having sacrificed Oliver to him ; and he easily overlooked an error which was so flattering to himself. This idea gave him no small embarrassment respecting Oliver ; and the latter, knowing him to be enamoured with Armoſlede, conceived a sort of dislike to him, and carefully avoided his presence—a circumstance which served to confirm Oger in his mistake.

The conversation became general in the faloon, Oliver alone, of all the company, being retired to the farther end of the room, where he sat indulging his sorrow, taking no part in it ; when the sound of a horn announced the arrival of a new knight ; and in a few minutes after appeared the valiant Astolphus, the renowned English Paladin (21), with whose reputation all our knights had been long acquainted, and whom Oliver had frequently met in his travels. After the first compliments were over, the company asked the English knight many questions respecting the present situation of his country. Beatrice was desirous of knowing the particulars of the revolution which had placed Egbert upon the throne, in opposition to the rights and the powerful party of queen Eadburga ; and Astolphus thus gratified the princess's curiosity.

“ The pretensions of queen Eadburga were in fact much better founded than those of Egbert ; but the throne is a possession, the inheritance of which can only be secured by the love of the people. The beginning of Eadburga's reign seemed to promise much felicity ; her tender youth, an agreeable person, and engaging manners, at first captivated every heart. Her mind was endowed with sensibility ; her early ambition

ambition was to form an agreeable and confidential society about her person, and to acquire true friends —But unhappily she was deficient both in sense and experience ; she made a bad choice ; and a disposition, of all others the most adapted to extend information and improve reason, served, in this case, only to lead her astray, and corrupt her. She loved at first with an engaging sincerity ; and she was less proud of her rank, than of the glory of having secured the attachment of friends whom she considered faithful. Full of courtesy and delicate attention, she placed all her happiness in preventing their desires, and loading them with favours. But so much generosity produced only ingratitude, and could never satisfy the insatiate ambition of her favourites. They were in general too unprincipled to promote the glory of the queen ; and the levity of their own conduct made them even desirous that she should show herself above, what they called, prejudice. It was indeed no difficult task to corrupt a young, a lively, and tender-hearted princess, of inferior understanding, and whose confidence they entirely possessed. They were able to induce her, on the most frivolous motives of pleasure or vanity, to break through the severe rules of etiquette, which sovereigns ought not to dispense with in public, but occasionally, in order to gain popularity. But the queen, without showing any unusual degree of goodness or affability towards the people, continued daily to act in a rash and inconsiderate manner ; and she insensibly lost all dignity of character and personal consideration. The favourites were not loved by the nation ; and they taught the queen to hold the people in disdain. She manifested her sentiments ; she was soon universally disliked, and received convincing proofs of her subjects aversion.—Then, instead of endeavouring to recover the good-will of the nation, she gave herself up entirely to the most violent resentment ; and, thinking

thinking that a little circle of flatterers sufficed for her glory, she ventured to brave the public opinion ; she had no longer any regard to her conduct, or put any restraint upon her passions. She professed such contempt for decorum, that even her court, the most corrupt in all Europe, was scandalized at it *. The favourites made some slight remonstrances ; but this served only to lessen them in her estimation. This unhappy princess, who had so long been led astray by flattery and dissipation, was no longer capable of listening to the voice of reason. At length, running on headlong to ruin, her conduct became so scandalous, that her effrontery seemed opprobrious in the eyes of the most contemptible and depraved. The favourites all kept their places, but protested they had lost all influence upon her mind ; that they were no longer consulted by her ; and, as a proof of this, they openly censured her proceedings, and strove which should most loudly reprobate her character and moral conduct. The queen, now convinced of the insincerity of her friends, sought for consolation in new follies. Discouraged and totally corrupted, her mind no longer gave reception to soft and tender sentiments, but abandoned itself, without restraint, to hatred and vengeance ; and her ruin was now complete. About this period, the revolution began ; every one knows the history of it ; and I shall only touch upon such particulars as relate to the queen. The people were desirous of seeing a reform of abuses ; the ambition and avidity of the courtiers counteracted measures which would lead to the sa-

* We must suppose that Astolphus here speaks in general terms, and that he allows of exceptions. And I must add, that my historical inquiries have furnished me with proof, that in this frivolous and licentious court there were many enlightened and virtuous characters, and that such were even to be found among those who successively shared the favour of the queen. But people of that description were not listened to.

erifice of their own interests. The queen, accustomed to despise the people, was blind to the danger which threatened her. She shewed the greatest unconcern ; and the multitude ascribed to courage, what only arose from ignorance. In the mean while, the people, who had risen in arms, obtained a victory ; and prince Egbert was on the point of mounting the throne, when Eadburga, yielding to necessity, at last promised to subscribe to the stipulated conditions ; the indulgent nation forgot her errors, replaced the crown upon her head, and prince Egbert was forced to seek an asylum at the court of Charlemagne. The nation, in having restored Eadburga to her former condition, had acted with equal generosity and sincerity ; but the courtiers, who hated the revolution, flattered themselves, that the queen might yet secure the success of their wild projects. With this view, they endeavoured to foment her resentment for the injuries she had received ; they persuaded her, she had still a powerful party ; that all Europe had their eyes upon her, and that she would acquire immortal glory, could she attain to the recovery of those rights which she had solemnly abjured. They continually repeated, that they expected every thing from her firmness and courage ; and the queen, infatuated with this flattery, and passionately desirous of vengeance, adopted all the extravagant measures which were proposed to her.—Then the courtiers applauded, in the highest terms of panegyric, her understanding, her greatness of soul ; and the unhappy princess, while she was acting the most imprudent and cowardly part, considered herself a heroine. What, indeed, could be more imprudent, than to let herself be surrounded with a crowd of people whose aversion to the revolution was notorious ? and what could be less courageous, than to repeat, in all her public speeches, the assurance of her sincerity, and of her attachment to the new laws ?

laws? The more so, as nothing obliged her to make these public harangues, and that she had recourse to them, without their being either solicited or desired. This duplicity, together with her indiscretion, and the imprudence of her pretended friends, revived the hatred and contempt of the nation. Her secret intrigues were discovered; and many were imputed to her which probably never existed; but the people, being convinced that the queen was implacable and insincere, at last decided irrevocably in favour of Egbert. That prince was recalled, and received with transport; his reputation for gentleness, integrity, and goodness, gave encouragement even to those who had shown themselves the most averse to his cause. His first step was publicly to take a solemn oath to forget for ever all personal injuries; and indeed his noble and open conduct removed every uneasiness in that regard. In the mean while, the people, exasperated against the queen, would have proceeded to violent measures, had not her successor been determined to save her from their fury. He charged me to escort her out of the kingdom, together with all her treasures; he himself traced out the road we should take, and told me, that, as soon as we had crossed the sea, I was to conduct her to whatever place she should choose for her residence on the continent.—As I took an occasion to praise the generosity of the king towards Eadburga, who had been accused of conspiring several times against his life: ‘Humanity alone,’ replied Egbert, ‘would prescribe such conduct; but even found policy requires it. Misfortune corrects none but superior minds; it confirms the degradation of base ones. I know the queen; I am certain, that, wherever her asylum may be, her conduct will justify, in the eyes of all Europe, the measures of the English nation. Let her live, and the partisans who are still attached to her cause will soon be forced to despise

pise her: whereas, were she to fall the victim of popular fury, the recollection of her whole life would be lost in that of her tragical end; compassion would succeed to the hatred she now inspires; she would leave behind her an interesting memory; and the enemies of the revolution would make her a heroine.' I acquiesced in the justice of these reflections; and I admired that happy union of policy and virtue in Egbert's conduct, which, indeed, is only to be found in great minds, and superior understandings. According to the king's order, I accompanied Eadburga in her flight, and crossed the sea with her. The princess was desirous of residing at that famous court, in which the prince who had just driven her from her country had himself formerly found an asylum. The reputation of Charlemagne had induced her to make this choice. The emperor considered Eadburga only as an unfortunate queen, to whom he owed support; and he thought, with great justice, that Egbert himself would be gratified to hear, that, under such circumstances, he had given reception to his rival and his enemy. I left Eadburga at Aix-la-Chapelle (22); and having heard of the unjust enterprise of the confederated princes against the duchess of Cleves, I am come to offer her my arm and my services."

CHAPTER X.

THE CONFIDENCES.

Le cœur a des secrets que l'esprit ne fait pas.

LA CHAUSSE.

The narration of Astolphus, the paladin, gave occasion to a general conversation, which lasted till supper-time. Astolphus placed himself at table by the

the side of Oliver, and requested that he would favour him with a private interview. The next day, Oliver retired to his chamber at noon, and the English knight told him, in confidence, that the principal motive of his journey was to solicit the hand of Beatrice for the king of England. "That prince," added he, "during his exile, passed through this country. Being quite unknown, and lost in the crowd, he only saw the duchess a single time at a public festival. She was then but fifteen years old; her father was still living; but she made an indelible impression upon the heart of Egbert; and he now lays at her feet the throne he has gained by his valour and his virtues." After mentioning these particulars, Astolphus added, that he wished to obtain a private audience with Beatrice, to deliver his mission. Oliver replied, that the princess never granted any upon political affairs since the persecutions she had suffered; that, having the different humours and pretensions of her defenders to manage, she carefully shunned every thing which might inspire them with suspicion, or give them umbrage; and that every kind of negotiation was transacted in public. This information greatly embarrassed Astolphus, who, knowing the aversion Beatrice had to marriage, was unwilling to receive a public refusal.—After some reflection, he intreated Oliver to sound her inclinations, and to praise the personal qualities of Egbert, whom he had known. "Every thing I could urge in that respect," continued he, "would appear suspicious on my part, but could not be so on yours." Oliver positively refused to be the bearer of this commission; and, at the repeated instance of Astolphus, he at length proposed to speak to Isambard on the subject, who, as well as himself, was acquainted with the king of England: and to this measure Astolphus consented. Oliver was led by two motives to make this refusal; the embarrassment

barrassment of a tête-à-tête with Beatrice, and the scruple of making her a proposal, the success of which would afflict Isambard ; the latter, it is true, had of late left off speaking to him of his passion for Beatrice. Oliver easily discerned, that the striking likeness of that princess to Celanira checked all his confidence on that point, and created an embarrassment which his reason could not overcome. But, persuaded that he adored the princess, and fancying he had perceived she had an inclination for him, he thought it his duty to inform him of this new event ; and he immediately repaired to him to relate it. Isambard listened with much emotion ; and, after having thanked him, said : " Well, my dear friend, if there exist a man on earth worthy of Beatrice, it is doubtless this prince ; and the proposal must be communicated to her, as Astolphus desires." " Then," returned Oliver, " thou wilt charge thyself with it." " No," replied Isambard, " I must confess, I should do it with an ill grace, and betray my own feelings. But I intreat thee to request this private interview, and to urge, in favour of Egbert, all that truth and justice can prompt, and afterwards to give me an exact, and even minute account of every thing she said upon this occasion."

When the company sat down to dinner, Oliver approached the duchess, and was so near to her, that she asked him, for the first time, to sit down by her. Oliver spoke but little, scarcely partook of the repast, and, during the whole meal, had not sufficient resolution to venture to make the request he had intended. Every time he determined upon it, he felt a violent fluttering at his heart, and his words expired upon his lips. At last, at the instant of leaving the table, Beatrice turning towards him, he cast down his eyes and blushed, and then stammered out, " Madam, may I venture to intreat you to grant me a moment's audience to-day ?" Beatrice made a

movement

movement of surprise, but immediately replied,
“ Yes, this evening, at six, in my closet.”

The company returned to the saloon. Beatrice appeared thoughtful, and quite lost in reflection.—Oliver retired to Isambard’s chamber, to wait the appointed hour of rendezvous. Isambard, regaining his former confidence in Oliver, laid open his heart before him, and declared all his amorous disquietudes; but he still persisted in his generosity, and strongly recommended to his friend, to speak of the king of England after his own conscience, and with perfect regard to truth. Some minutes before six, Oliver repaired to the princess’s apartment. As he went through the suite of rooms which led to her cabinet; a recollection, at the same time delicious yet full of bitterness, was revived in his imagination; the hour, the disposition of the rooms, their furniture, the agitation of his mind, all recalled his first private interview with Celanira, in the palace of Charlemagne, when Emma sent him into her closet, where Celanira expected him. The idea that the personal resemblance, and the like sound of voice of Beatrice, was about to increase the illusion, completed his distress. At length, he arrived at the door of the cabinet—it was half opened—he stopped short—At this moment, a voice, which reached to the bottom of his soul, gently called to him, and bade him come in. It was the first time the princess, in speaking to him, called him by his name; and the manner in which she pronounced these two words, “ *Come, Oliver,*” had something so touching in it, that his eyes overflowed with tears.—Oliver, notwithstanding the infirm state of his health, and his excessive paleness, was still remarkable for the graces of his person. His eyes, full of fire and sentiment, expressed all he felt within him; and, in his manner, his gesture, and the tone of his voice, there was a native gracefulness, which inspired interest, and

and captivated the attention. Beatrice, on perceiving him, arose from her seat ; and, casting her eyes upon him, she was so struck at the expression of his countenance, that she remained several minutes without sitting down. At last, she resumed her seat, and pointing to a chair which was beside her, Oliver sat down, but did not utter a word. The duchess was placed in such a light, as obscured part of her countenance, and disguised the colour of her hair and eyes ; the form of her face was sufficiently visible, and she was dressed in white.—Oliver recollects, that this was Celanira's usual dress ; and never before did the resemblance appear to him so exact. His embarrassment and emotion were equally distressing. What would the duchess think of his silence and his looks ? Yet he was unable to speak ; an insurmountable oppression of mind deprived him of all power of utterance ; and, besides, he could not well recollect what he had to impart : the constraint he was under, and his perplexity, are not to be described. After some minutes passed in this manner, Beatrice broke silence : “ Well, Oliver,” said she, “ what have you to say to me ?”—“ Ah, Madam !” returned the wretched knight—He could not proceed, but burst into tears ; then, covering his face with his hands, he was going to retire.—The duchess held him, saying, in broken accents, “ Stay—you must stay.”—Oliver, more affected than ever, remained motionless—his tears ceased to flow—a sensation, he could not define, now suspended and dissipated his embarrassment. He looked at the duchess ; and, for the first time, he found her as beautiful and interesting as Celanira herself ; she was weeping—“ O heavens !” cried he.—He dared not say more ; but, all painful recollection being for a moment removed, he saw but only her, and contemplated her with rapture. “ Hear me, Oliver,” returned the duchess, “ I am going, I believe, to spare you an embarrassing confession ; I have

discovered your secret ; and I am well acquainted with it. I knew that a striking resemblance calls to your memory a most afflicting scene—I pity you from the bottom of my heart—I grieve at this singular likeness which afflicts you ; but, in the name of heaven, let not the illusion deprive me of such a champion ;—and if you be come to take your leave”—“Leave, madam, what I,” interrupted Oliver with vehemence, “I quit you, while my arm can serve you ?—Ah ! to shed my blood in your defence, to die for you, such henceforth shall be the only glory of which I can be ambitious !”—“ You dispel my fears,” replied the duchess, “ I had imagined you intended to leave me.” Oliver sighed, and made no reply. He distrusted his own heart, and ventured not even to speak. After a moment’s silence, “I will tell you,” said the duchess, “ how I divined your sentiments. Long before your arrival, Angilbert and Lancelot had spoken to me of this resemblance, which causes so much pain, and they had related the tragical end of the unfortunate Celanira, and in what manner you exposed your life to save hers.” Here Oliver shuddered. These words destroyed the enchantment which had been affording him a momentary reprieve ;—and the duchess resuming her discourse ; “this fatal story,” continued she, “deeply interested me. I imagined, that among the great number of knights which compose the court of Charlemagne, it was impossible but that some of them must have loved a person of such extraordinary worth and beauty. I imagined, that if any one of those knights came here, I should discover his sentiments by the distress my presence would give him. Oger, the Dane, arrived here three weeks before you, he informed me, the Knights of the Swan would soon follow him ; the celebrated name of Oliver recalled to my mind that of the interesting and unhappy Celanira.—I asked several questions—Oger told me you were plunged into the deepest melancholy,

choly, and that a black crape covered your shield ; from that moment I suspected the truth.—I waited your arrival with extreme curiosity.—When you appeared, I recognized you at a distance—for I had received an exact description of your face and person.—I never shall forget the expression of your countenance at that first moment of surprise and emotion.—I was more affected at it than I am well able to describe.”—On saying this the duchess left off speaking—and the tears of Oliver began to flow afresh.
“ I will not deny,” madam, returned he, “ what you have discovered ; it is true, I adore her.—I shall carry with me to the grave this fatal passion !—Ah ! can any thing short of eternal regret be felt for one who so perfectly resembled you ?”—The duchess made no reply, and a long silence ensued. At last Beatrice, starting from her reverie, said ; “ I only entered into this explanation, to remove the distressing embarrassment I always occasion you ; I am but too well aware, that nothing can console you ; but I was desirous to rid you at least of the torment of constraint ; I have thought too, that the illusion of this resemblance would be less distressing to you, when you had no longer any apprehensions of exciting my astonishment by inexplicable behaviour. As to your secret, I need not tell you that you may depend on my discretion ; nor shall I ever renew the painful subject, but shall consider myself honoured by the confidence you have placed in me ; and my heart, from the concern it takes in your sorrow, is, I trust, worthy of that confidence. Now, Oliver, inform me of the occasion of your visit.” Oliver was so deeply affected, that he was obliged to collect himself for some minutes, in order to be able to make reply ; at length, he entered into the particulars of his mislion, and launched out into the highest praise of Egbert. The duchess heard him without making any interruption, and when he had left off speaking, “ How old is the king of England ?”

land?" said she. This question, which seemed to be the prelude to some sort of deliberation, made Oliver blush: "I believe, madam," replied he, "that the prince is about my own age, and I am twenty-eight."—"Oliver, what would you advise me to do?"—"I think, with Isambard, that if there exist in the universe a man, who may reasonably have pretensions to the hand of the duchess of Cleves, it is the king of England."—"But is not having pretensions to my hand, likewise having pretensions to my heart?"—"Policy, reason, and glory, madam, are the usual motives of an alliance with persons of your rank."—"You place me then in the class of all other princesses?"—"I, great God, who can only compare you with one sole object!"—Here Oliver stopped and blushed again.—"Well," returned the princess, "I must tell you, Oliver, that, if I form the engagement you propose, I shall consult my heart only. For the interest of my subjects I could, indeed, quit the spot which gave me birth, but ambition will never be able to induce me to abandon my country. You may communicate this answer to the English knight." At these words Oliver arose, made a low bow, and withdrew. Full of perplexity and agitation of mind, he was averse to reflect upon this conversation, and to enter into an examination of his own sentiments. He made a strong resolution to shun, with the greatest care, every opportunity of seeing the duchess in private, and determined never to allow his thoughts to dwell upon the recollection of this dangerous interview. He announced to Isambard, and the English knight, the refusal of Beatrice; and this refusal, which was of so positive a nature, tended still farther to encourage the hopes of his friend.

CHAPTER XI.

A MISTAKE.

Male amor si nasconde.

TASSO.

*Ben s'ode il ragionar, si vede il volto,
Ma dentro il petto, mal giudicar puossi.*

ARIOSTO.

IN the castle of Cleves nothing announced the direful expectation of war ; while ambition, jealousy, and hatred, spread gloom and mistrust through the camp of the confederate princes, the court of Beatrice, more brilliant than ever, afforded each day the most varied and agreeable amusements. Beatrice was possessed of that true dignity of character which virtue alone can confer ; the purity of her conduct, the nobleness and modesty of her demeanour, the delicacy of her mind, and at the same time the sweetnes of her temper and manners, inspired at once respect and confidence. So amiable was she, and so graceful, that the desire of pleasing her influenced the general behaviour of all about her : her presence checked, without constraining, freedom ; and the acquisition of such ascendancy is the supreme art not only of a prince's, but of every young and handsome woman, whatever may be her rank in society. Or rather, it is an invaluable gift of nature which arises from purity and elevation of mind, and the want of which education can only supply by frivolous and superficial accomplishments.

Beatrice joined to superior talents, and the most ample and cultivated mind, that charming infancy of character which appears with so much grace when united with brilliant and solid qualities. Capable of reasoning with solidity, and engaging in serious pursuits

suits and studies, Beatrice could find amusement in trifles, and could laugh at a thousand little things which would excite the disdain of supercilious wit. Although she had naturally a gaiety of disposition, which was as lively as unaffected, yet her extreme sensibility rendered her temper unequal ; she was always gentle, kind, and courteous, but not always gay ; sometimes she appeared thoughtful, absent, and melancholy ; in such cases, however, the gaiety of others never seemed to displease, or be troublesome to her ; this inequality therefore was in her an additional grace, and served to render her as interesting as original. The duchess consecrated to study and public affairs all her mornings and a portion of the afternoon, and in the evening she gave herself up to the pleasures of society ; then the hours were passed in converse, music, dancing, and sports invented for the amusement of infancy ; which have still such charms for youth, and recall with rapture the happy days of innocence and felicity.—Young Delia seemed to prefer such kind of amusement to all others ; she never proposed it indeed, and would refrain at first from joining in it ; however, in the course of a few minutes her repugnancy would vanish, and the sports would soon overcome her habitual melancholy and timidity ; by degrees she would grow animated, and resume all the childishness and gaiety of her time of life. Oliver never took part in these gambols, but attended to the music, and whenever the duchess sung, he sought the most retired part of the saloon, and always sat in such a manner as not to see her face. Lancelot had a fine voice ; one evening when he had sung several ballads composed by Angilbert, the latter addressing himself to the duchess : “ I know not,” said he, “ why Lancelot is always singing my verses, for he composes more agreeable songs himself. I have remarked one in particular which he has lately made here, and which he sings with the most touching

touching expression."—Upon this, the duchess asked for the ballad; at the same moment Delia arose from her seat, and was going to withdraw. The duchess held her, and being much surprised at the blushes which covered her face, she looked at Lancelot as if she requested the explanation of this mystery. "This lady knows the first stanza of this ballad," said Lancelot, looking at Delia, "and she does not allow me to sing it."—"And that," returned Angilbert, "because Lancelot has given the heroine of his song the charming name of Delia; but this name is Greek, and the poet has certainly a right to introduce it into his verses." The duchess smiled, and as the Knights of the Swan only, with those we have already mentioned, were present, Beatrice, who was pleased at Lancelot's passion for her young friend, authorised him by a sign to sing the ballad; he then took up a lute, and accompanied the following stanzas.

That heart alone can transports prove,
Whose tender throbings beat to love.
'Tis love that gilds life's varied day;
And e'en though tears oft mark its way,
And melancholy cloud the sky,
A thousand raptures still are nigh.

Ah! Delia! bright as noon-tide day
Thine eyes their killing power display;
But yet the gods who form'd thee fair
Have steeld thy breast to am'rous care.
How different far the tasks we prove;
'Tis thine to charm, and mine to love.

To dull indifference a prey,
No tender interests charm thy day;
And tho' of absence I complain,
Or murmur at thy cold disdain,
Yet still I love, and whilst I sigh
Soft soothing hope perchance is nigh.

Thou

THE KNIGHTS OF

Thou listless ey'st the verdant mead,
 Nor heed'st the flow'rets 'neath thy tread ;
 But my fond dreams thy presence share,
 I see and hear my absent fair ;
 And where my Delia wastes the day
 My heart still roves, my senses stray.

Thou boast'st to love sweet Philomel,
 Whose amorous ditty charms the dell.
 She chants the lovers tender woe,
 And all the bliss that lovers know.
 But ah ! can Delia transports prove
 Which none can feel but those who love ?

The village train to sports repair,
 Nor greater joys are Delia's care.
 But while in mazy dance we reel
 How wide the different joys we feel.
 I grasp the hand of her I love,
 And I alone can rapture prove.

A slave to love's delicious pain,
 In dreams I taste my joys again,
 And wait the morning's welcome light,
 When Delia's beauty charms my sight ;
 Whilst bright Aurora's blushing ray
 Is nought for thee but birth of day.....

At the end of this last stanza of Lancelot's song the too tender Delia was unable to conceal her painful emotion ; she leaned towards the princess, one of whose hands she held in her own, and hid her face all bathed in tears upon Beatrice's shoulder—But Lancelot had observed her falling tear ; and full of trouble, hope, and delight, he left off singing—Every one looked on in silence, and each interpreted the confusion of Delia in the manner that Lancelot did. The duchess, much affected, and feeling for the embarrassment of her friend, at length renewed the conversation. She attributed this strange movement

ment to the excessive bashfulness of Delia, and observed that she had seen instances of the same kind in her conduct before. Afterwards she arose, took Delia by the arm, and went out of the room with her, leaving Lancelot inebriated with delight, and the rest of the company fully convinced, that he was actually beloved.

CHAPTER XII.

THE EMBROIDERED HANDKERCHIEF.

*Le mépris suit des près l'amour
Qu' inspirent les coquettes.*

FENELON.

*C'est providence de l'amour
Que coquette trouve un volage.*

LA MOTHE.

C'est d'un amour constant la vertu qui décide.

CREBILLON.

THE next morning, Angilbert, Isambard, and Lancelot, all met together in the apartment of the latter. These three persons, who had been long united by esteem, mutual confidence, and similarity of taste and disposition, were fond of giving themselves up to the gratification of a converse which old acquaintance and friendship render so interesting and agreeable, particularly after a long absence. Lancelot and Isambard, full of pleasing hope, were on this day more than usually communicative ; the conversation became very animated, they spoke much of the intrigues of the court of Charlemagne and of the mutual passion of the princess Bertha and Angilbert, of which both Isambard and Lancelot, by the princess's own permission, had been confidants.

After having touched upon many particularities of their amours, "There is one thing," said Isambard, "which I never could comprehend; a singular circumstance obliged you, for the interest even of your passion, to communicate it to me, together with your hopes, before you had obtained from Bertha the confession of her own sentiments; I observed you four months together entirely taken up with her, and at the instant in which she appeared the most disposed in your favour, you broke with each other with the most astonishing levity on both sides; for instance, the very evening of this rupture Bertha avowed to me, without the least disguise, that she loved you, and on your own part I knew you adored her; yet two days after she forbade me in the most positive manner to mention your name, and you yourself have never thought fit to explain the motives of this sudden quarrel."—"He had acted for a long while with like reserve towards me," returned Lancelot smiling, "and for reasons which you will approve; but he may now without any scruple communicate this singular adventure to you." At these words Angilbert, being closely pressed by Isambard, began to speak as follows.

"I did not in fact adore the princess Bertha, as Isambard has just mentioned; he only attributes to me the sentiment he himself at the present moment experiences; I entertained a very different one. In the disposition and manners of the princess I found that undefinable charm without which love cannot exist, and which nevertheless does not always create a violent passion. I loved her without blindness, I saw her without illusion; she was not in my eyes the most beautiful and amiable woman in the universe, but after a moment's reflection, my heart would have given Bertha the preference, had I been to choose between her and the most accomplished of her sex. The sentiments she inspired did not turn my head, but deeply penetrated my soul; I was not secure from a transient

transient seduction; other objects could still attract and master me for a moment; she alone had the power of fixing me. A little time before I had dared to give encouragement to the hopes of rendering myself agreeable to her, I met with a very odd adventure. You know I have a house at a little distance from Aix la Chapelle, and that springs of mineral water are contained in my field. As they are of a different quality from those of the city*, I appropriated them to the use of the public. I constructed bathing rooms; those of the men made a part of my own house, the women's-baths were separated from them by a little wood. The latter buildings I had taken great pains to ornament—they lie within a spacious enclosure surrounded by a wall, and containing a handsome garden abounding in fruit trees and flowers. This garden has two gates; the chief one is attended by one of my servants, who never leaves it, and who lets in the women who come to bathe. The other opens into a small wood which leads to my house; of this gate I alone had a key, because I commonly went through the garden in my way to the city, in order to avoid a round-about road thither. But I went through it alone, I sent my servants and horses to meet me at the other gate, and before I entered this enclosure a horn was always sounded to give notice to the porter, who at this signal had my horses brought up to the lodge. I took this precaution on account of the women who might be bathing, who, if they did not choose to be observed, could remain in their tents. One morning, when I went into this garden, after giving the accustomed signal, I saw at a distance the most extraordinary thing in the world. It was a woman who came out of the tents and ran to

* At Burscheid, near Aix la Chapelle, the waters are different from those in the latter place. Angilbert's house was therefore very likely situated at Burscheid.

meet me ; this action, which took place just after the sounding of the horn, left no doubt upon my mind, but that the woman was one of the most abandoned part of the sex ; but I was no less surprised at this extraordinary excess of impudence. I stood still, imagining she would then go back to the tent and put on her clothes ; but she still advanced towards me : the only covering she had was a wet and short shift, and her long black hair, which spread over her breast and shoulders. When she approached near enough to enable me to take a more particular survey of her person, I observed with additional surprise that she had entirely veiled her face with a handkerchief, which she had twisted round her head. This circumstance gave me a kind of curiosity, and looking attentively at her as she drew near, I was much struck with the perfection of her form, and the dazzling whiteness of her skin—At last, after coming up to me, she threw herself into my arms—At the same instant, all trembling and out of breath, she fell upon her knees, and laying hold of the cloke which I had upon my shoulders, she appeared desirous to cover herself with it, and to entreat me to give it to her, and all this without uttering a single word. Being at a loss what to think, concern and curiosity succeeded, in spite of me, to contempt and indignation ; however I remained still of my first opinion, but not being fully convinced, and willing to see what would be the unravelling of the scene, I yielded to the desire she expressed, I gave her my cloke, and offered to conduct her to my house ; she returned a sign of assent, and that confirmed me in my first opinion. She wrapped herself up in the cloke, I lent her my arm, and we walked on together towards the wood. In vain I endeavoured to discover through the veil whether her face corresponded with the incomparable beauty of her person ; it was impossible to see a single feature. The handkerchief that was round her head, on which were

were embroidered nosegays of roses, entirely hid her countenance. She walked along with difficulty, and I was much hurt at seeing the prettiest feet in the world torn by the sharp gravelly path. Moreover, she persisted in obstinate silence ; she sighed too, and seemed to be in great agitation. We entered the house through a back door, and without being perceived ; we ascended the stair-case, and I conducted her into my room, and shut myself up with her. ‘ Now’ said I, ‘ explain the meaning of all this.’ She advanced towards a table, laid hold of an ink stand, and made a sign to me to go out of the room ; to this I objected. She still persisted by her gestures. I observed that I could not go without taking my cloke. At these words she fell down upon her knees, and began to sob and groan, and this made an impression upon me which I am unable to describe. All the ideas I had conceived vanished away ; I imagined I was contemplating innocence itself, and I felt the keenest remorse at having alarmed and mistaken it. I lifted up the fair mourner, she was seized with a convulsive trembling, which gave me the greatest concern ; she appeared quite overcome with terror, and not to hear what I was saying to console her. As she seemed to have hardly strength enough to support herself, I was going to give her my arm to lead her to a couch, but all on a sudden, breaking loose from me, she ran to a window, and hastily lifted it up, as if she were determined to throw herself headlong into the court—This movement was so natural, that it made me shudder from head to foot : I rushed forward, I held her back, the cloke, which was unfolded, fell upon the ground, and the unknown lady was again as naked as before—in this manner I beheld her a second time, but with sensations far different from those I had felt in the garden. How did the timidity and bashfulness, which I now ascribed to her, heighten the lustre of her charms ! She appeared

peared to me a divinity—I was holding her by the arm, but I instantly knelt one knee upon the ground, and taking up the cloke, I covered my face with it, while I was presenting it to her—This action seemed to calm her ; I then observed I was going to retire, and send a female servant, who should receive her orders, and that I would not appear again except she deigned to send for me. I then immediately went out, and dispatched my housekeeper to her. Full of curiosity, concern, and disquietude, I walked about the garden, and on reflecting on this strange adventure, I imagined this fair lady was affected with one of those nervous complaints which cause a giddiness in the head and frequent fits of insanity, and that in one of these moments of delirium she had run out of the tent. But I had seen no woman with her. How could she come to the bath all alone ? The more I thought, the more I was puzzled ; yet it was no longer possible to form injurious suspicions, when I considered the naturalnes of all the movements which indicated her modesty and her alarms ; her sighs and sobbings still founded in my ears, and I had observed the handkerchief, which covered her face, was wet with tears. I was thus bewildering myself in conjectures, when the housekeeper came to speak to me. She was delighted with the unknown lady, who it seems had thrown herself into her arms on seeing her, for joy, as she said, to find a person of her own sex. The lady was now dressed, for her clothes had been sent for from the bathing room ; but still keeping the embroidered handkerchief about her head, she absolutely refused to suffer her face to be seen. In a word, every thing was at last explained, and her story she had related as follows : A young man, who had been in love with her for upwards of a year, after having vainly attempted to render his addresses acceptable, appeared for two months past to take no farther notice of her. The use of the baths being prescribed
her,

her, she came to take them early in a morning attended by a waiting maid only. This woman fell sick, and a seamstress, who worked for the unknown lady, undertook to procure a proper person to accompany her to the baths, and to wait on her there. This proposal being accepted, it was agreed, that the new waiting maid should on that day go an hour earlier than her mistress to the bathing rooms, in order to get things in readiness, and likewise because she lodged hard by the village ; but after bathing she was to attend the young lady home. In consequence of which, the latter had brought a domestic with her, whom she had sent back on her arrival at the gate. When she came to the tent she called the new waiting maid, whom she saw at a distance in the garden ; and in the mean while she began to undress herself in haste ; she was already in the bath when the maid arrived ; but what was her surprise, when looking at this pretended woman, she recognized the young man who was in love with her—Her situation was peculiarly shocking, as there was no bathing-woman that morning in the tent, and she was all alone. Dismayed, and wild, her danger gave her supernatural force ; she broke from his arms, and made her way out of the tent : at this moment was heard the sound of the horn, she ran towards the gates, still imagining she was pursued by the young man ; for she had quite lost her senses—Besides, she could not well see, for on coming out of the bath she had covered her face, and in this manner it was that she met me.

—This relation, many particulars of which I abridge, but which added to the probability of the story, seemed to me the more satisfactory, as it was confirmed by the evidence of the keeper of the gate, whom I had sent for to question him. He told me, that in reality a very tall woman, of a singular appearance, had arrived at the break of day, calling herself waiting-woman to a young and handsome lady who

who was coming to bathe ; that at the moment when the horn sounded she had come back to the gate in great confusion, and run out with precipitation ; that at the end of the street, having mounted a horse which was in waiting for her there, she had been seen to gallop away and disappear in a moment. This detail removed every doubt of the sincerity and innocence of the unknown charmer, and I now felt the most eager curiosity respecting her, and the greatest interest in her behalf. It appeared to me very natural, that modesty even might have induced her to hide her face rather than her bosom, in order not to be known again by him who had had the happiness to behold her in the dress of nature ; and I farther imagined, that for the same reason she was averse to discover the sound of her voice ; but I could not forgive myself for having treated her with so much levity and disdain, and I died with impatience to make due reparation. I had just sent her some flowers, some fruit, and refreshments ; and while she was at breakfast, I wrote her a letter full of gallantry and respect. In a few minutes her answer was brought me ; the handwriting was visibly disguised, but I found so much grace and elevation of mind in the billet, that admiration was now added to the sentiments she had already inspired. In her note she requested me to have her accompanied to an inn which she mentioned in the neighbourhood, and informed me she was just going thither. I sent a message, requesting to be permitted to come and take my leave of her ; and she consented to receive me. I returned to the chamber where I had left her, with equal emotion and trouble ; I was ashamed of my behaviour to her, and I was extremely desirous to impress her with a more favourable idea of me. She was dressed in a plain but elegant style ; and I was smitten with the gracefulness of her mien. She no longer had the embroidered handkerchief upon her head, but her face was still

veiled

veiled by a large black taffety hood, which fell down to her bosom. On perceiving me she arose, and her countenance was expressive of trouble and confusion. I felt myself quite at a loss ; and, as she had made a resolution not to utter a syllable, her silence increased my embarrassment ; for when we are intimidated, there is nothing so distressing as the necessity of finishing every phrase, and the certitude of meeting with no interruption. After having repeated the most respectful excuses, I added, that she would be sufficiently avenged by the remembrances of every kind which she would leave behind her. At these words she shook her head. ‘ No,’ replied I with earnestness, ‘ these remembrances are indelible, they will disturb the tranquillity of my life.—I will go in quest of you every where ; and, should I not meet you, I shall find no object that can give me the idea of perfection that my imagination will be ever forming, on reflecting upon what I have seen, and on what I have read.—Ah, since you are resolved not to answer me, do not refuse to confer upon me some pledge of your good-will ; let me receive at your hands the handkerchief which covered your face ; how precious would that gift prove !—’(She made a sign of refusal.) ‘ At least,’ said I, ‘ you must leave me this cloak, which I have twice had the honour of presenting to you—it will realize the fabulous account of those fatal garments, which consumed the wearer to death.—But I shall not have the temerity to cover myself with it ; that surely would be a profanation.—Here shall it remain, there—on the spot on which I saw it fall from you ; on the spot where my trembling hand had the courage to present it to you will I raise an altar to Love and Modesty, and deposit it thereon !—As I finished these words she hung her head upon her bosom ; I fancied I could see her blush through her veil.—I seized one of her hands, she wore gloves, and I recollect I had not taken particular notice of it when naked ;

naked ; I was vexed at my negligence, as a more attentive examination might have enabled me to know her one day again. She gently withdrew her hand, but she had given mine a squeeze, and heaved a sigh. This first symptom of sensibility charmed and affected me ; I threw myself at her feet, and, forgetting the language of gallantry, I addressed her with less art and more sentiment. She obliged me to rise, and then turning her face towards me, and drawing nearer, she seemed to listen with attention. I still intreated her to remove her veil, or to tell me her name ; and upon her refusal, I assured her she would leave me the most wretched of mankind. Upon this, she took some paper and a pencil out of her pocket, and with her left hand wrote this short billet : *I would make myself known, were it in my power to do so without dying with shame and confusion. Besides, I am well assured, that a new object would soon supplant me in the affections of the fickle and seducing Angilbert.—‘Seducing,’ cried I, after having read these few lines, ‘the manner in which you treat me proves too truly I am not so. Fickle I may have been, but it depends on yourself to retrieve my reputation in that respect.’—She made a sign of disbelief. ‘Well,’ returned I, ‘if ever you see me engaged by another object, make yourself known to me; and be assured, that an enchanting remembrance will give you all the claims of the most sacred engagement. Thus will it be ever in your power to break those light chains, which I shall only wear in order to drive your image from my heart.’ She gently shrugged her shoulders, and snatching her pencil, she wrote a few more lines to request my word of honour never to relate this adventure to any person whatever. I promised to obey ; she thanked me by nodding her head, then putting one hand to the door, she held out the other towards me by way of bidding me farewell. This adieu gave me great affliction, and I declared to her the greatness of*

of my sufferings. At this she appeared affected, for there was a singular expression in her mien, her attitudes, and her gestures; but she showed a fixed determination to go away. I conjured her to answer me one more question, and I then inquired whether her heart were free. She wrote this reply: *I do not well know that myself.* At this very instant she got up; in vain I endeavoured to detain her;—she moved towards the door, I held her by the hand, which I kissed with much tenderness; she paused a minute, and appearing to have a struggle within herself, she quitted me abruptly, darted towards the door, opened it, and disappeared. She left me in sad depression of spirits, and this melancholy proved, that she had made almost as much impression upon my heart as upon my imagination. I went to the porter of the gate leading to the baths, I had forgotten to ask him whether he had seen her face when she arrived; but he replied, that she passed by him very fast, that he was engaged at that moment, and that he had not at all noticed her person. I was deeply afflicted on thinking I should most likely never be able to recognise her, and yet that perhaps I should frequently meet her. I called to mind all the ladies of the court, in order to find the likeness of my unknown fair one among them, and I recollect^{ed} but two, whose faces are as different as their characters, but who are of the same height, were equally fair, and who both had beautiful black locks; these were Amalberga and Armoflede. I was disconsolate to think, that one was adored by the emperor, and the other, according to public report, the wife of Oliver. I recollect^{ed}, that the fair nymph of the bath, when I questioned her upon the state of her heart, had replied with incertitude, which was not suitable to one who had openly avowed her passion; thus all my suspicions fell upon Amalberga. I was satisfied her virtue and modesty were such, that, were I not mistaken

taken in my conjectures, she must blush the first time we should meet together. My curiosity did not allow me to defer this experiment. I went to court, and at the princess Bertha's apartments I saw Amalberga. I looked her full in the face ; her eyes met mine. She was surprised at the attentive manner in which I surveyed her, and smiled at it in so ingenuous a manner, that I was instantly undeceived. However I accosted her, and inquired whether she had not bathed that morning. She replied with such simplicity and ease, as completely disabused me. I then accosted Armo-flede, who discovered the like ignorance ; but, as I had not so favourable an opinion of her sincerity, I entertained my doubts for a longer time. At last she herself succeeded in removing them, and in her turn embarrassed me with her inquiries into the reason of my questions and mysterious air ; a curiosity which she manifested for more than eight days in so natural a manner, that the slightest degree of suspicion no longer remained in my mind. I then imagined the charming person I had seen did not go to court, or perhaps was some stranger. Her remembrance long pursued me ; and for more than two months I never met a young person in the streets or walks, who appeared to have a graceful shape and fine black hair, without some emotion.

“ Sentiments less romantic and violent perhaps, but more solid and more genuine, now began to supplant this amorous folly. I attached myself to the princess Bertha ; I was soon convinced that I was loved, yet I was unable to obtain an avowal of it. At this time, which was about the middle of winter, a grand masked ball was given at court ; the emperor and the princesses were the only persons who did not wear masks. At midnight the emperor retired ; I ventured then to approach Bertha. I had disguised myself with great care ; I made myself known to her, and, in order to get rid of the circle which surrounded

rounded us, she proposed to walk about the ball room. She laid hold of Armoflede, and another lady, and began to walk between them ; I followed, and a moment after I softly requested Armoflede, who had just unmasked, to allow me to separate her from the princess in giving each an arm. She consented, on condition that I would tell her my name. This I did without any hesitation. She smiled, made no reply, and gave me the place I solicited. We stopped at the farther end of the room ; the princess sat down, the two ladies placed themselves on her right, and I remained on the other side, hard by a small door, through which I could retreat if prudence required it, and suddenly disappear. In about a quarter of an hour Armoflede, upon I know not what pretext, arose and withdrew : a mask came and sat by the other lady, and their conversation becoming very animated, gave me an opportunity of speaking without constraint to the princess. I complained of the state of incertitude in which she left me ; I entreated her at length to fix my destiny by a single word, which would suffice for my happiness. ‘ Well,’ said she, ‘ you will no longer reproach me for my silence, I have answered the letter I received from you this morning ; I have the note in my pocket, but if I gave it you, you would leave me in order to peruse it.—We may without any inconvenience remain here another hour, we must after that separate, and then I will give you the answer.’ This promise could leave me under no uneasiness with regard to the contents of the letter, or rather it told me beforehand what I should find in it. Thus, happy and satisfied, I submitted without any difficulty to this decision. Three quarters of an hour rapidly stole away in delightful converse. But, notwithstanding the desire I felt to read the letter, my spirits drooped at the idea of being obliged to separate in a few minutes. Bertha shared my regret, and was expressing her feelings in the

the most engaging manner, when the door near which I sat suddenly opened, and discovered a female of an enchanting form, with long black locks floating upon her shoulders, and dressed in a robe of white muslin, of so thin a texture, that it appeared nothing more than the slight drapery of a picture. Her face was concealed, but what was my surprise on recognizing in the veil which covered it, the handkerchief embroidered with roses!—Bertha was turned towards the lady she had with her, and neither had observed the opening of the door, nor the person who entered the room.—Without losing any time, the unknown lady accosted me, and whispered, *Do you know me?* This question, so natural at a masquerade, produced an effect upon me which was truly magical. The lady held out a charming hand to me; I arose with transport, I seized that hand.—She drew me along; we went out at the small door, which was still left open. We found ourselves in a dark passage, at the end of which we came to the vestibule which led to the various apartments of the palace; walking forwards in great haste, we traversed the great gallery, and afterwards several other rooms. We then arrived at the foot of a stair-case; after ascending the stairs, we stopped at a door which quickly opened. We entered, and I recognised the apartment of Armoflede; it was in truth Armoflede herself! I had lost my head, I was infatuated with delight, and utterly incapable of the least reflection. Armoflede seemed to partake my delirium—I did not leave her chamber till half an hour before sun-rise.—But, when I found myself alone, and restored to my senses, all this enchantment disappeared. I shuddered on reflecting upon my unaccountable and injurious procedure with regard to the princess; I had left her without any pretext, without saying a word, at the instant in which I was going to receive from her the most positive proofs of love and confidence. She had declared it, she had promised

mised it, and in a few minutes we should have separated happy in each other—I felt all she must undergo ; the truth even, which honour did not allow me to declare, would not have rendered me more excusable in her eyes. I could not myself conceive I had been guilty of such extravagant conduct. I had been unworthily abusing a woman, who, condescending to forget the distance which separated us, preferred me to the most illustrious and brilliant situation in Europe ; a woman too, who was amiable, virtuous, tender, and with whom I was enamoured. And to what object had I been sacrificing gratitude, and love, and every endearing obligation ? to the most contemptible of her sex. For on reflecting upon all the conduct of Armoſlede, it was impossible to deceive myself in that respect. The modesty, the reserve, the extreme confusion, which she had affected before she made herself known, accorded so ill with her appearance at the ball, and with what had now passed between us, that the most passionate love would have been unable to blind me with regard to her character. When I reflected, that she appeared in public to love Oliver, that she professed a tender attachment to the princess Bertha ; when I considered, that, having discovered my growing passion for the princess, she had waited till it was returned, before she attempted to supplant her, and that she had contrived her plan of seduction in a manner the most mortifying and offensive to her rival ; when I made all these reflections, I experienced movements of indignation which arose almost to hatred. However, I endeavoured to clear up my conduct to the princess ; I wrote her a long letter full of well-invented falsehoods. The letter was returned unopened. Bertha conducted herself with such dignity and firmness, and at the same time with such reason and sensibility, that her empire over my heart was for ever established. She sought neither to show, nor to dissemble, the keenness

keenness of the pain she felt. She appeared serious and melancholy, but had no recourse to reproaches, or even to any indirect complaint ; she affected neither disdain nor anger, did not forbid me to appear at her palace, and still treated me with politeness and courtesy ; but never allowed me a single opportunity of speaking a word to her alone, and constantly sent back all my letters without having broken them open. This conduct deprived me of all hope, and gave me great affliction ; and the artful Armoflede, in spite of all her charms, could neither console me nor make me any amends. Bertha had not the least suspicion of her, for she had neither seen nor observed her when she tore me away from my place. She had turned round at the hasty manner of my leaving her ; but I was already upon the threshold of the door, and Armoflede, who walked before me, was in the passage. Thus was our intrigue absolutely unknown to her. I can assert with truth, that on the very morrow I could have put an end to it without struggle ; but the attention due to a woman even whom we most despise, did not allow me to think of so sudden a rupture ; besides, I stood in need of dissipation. I was curious too to see how far female depravation could go, and I imagined Armoflede capable of showing me. I suspected, that all the history of the bath was fabulous, and that she had planned beforehand that extraordinary farce. I fancied it would be no small gratification to hear such an avowal from the most insincere woman in the world ; and, in order to attain it, I affected the greatest perversion of manners. I quickly perceived she loved me the better for this, and when she was fully convinced, that we both were of the same way of thinking, she became quite at her ease, and owned things which quite surpassed all I could have imagined. I praised every thing she communicated, and at last I interrogated her upon the adventure of the bath. She burst into a fit of laughter, and

and confessed, without the least hesitation, that, having for some time past *taken a fancy* to me (such was her expression, for we had banished from our converse the words *love* and *passion*), she had planned the means of seducing me ; and that the pretended waiting-maid was a confidential domestic, the minister of her intrigues, whom she had dressed in women's clothes, in order that a report should be made to confirm me in my mistake. This I had guessed, yet I was nevertheless quite confounded to hear her avow it ; but at the same time this avowal did not give me the complete conviction I was desirous of, for I thought, that, if by chance she had not in fact taken this stratagem into her head, it was very possible she would falsely attribute to herself the invention of it. In her imposture is so natural, that even when she is conscious of making a display of all her viciousness, without any inconvenience, still will she have recourse to untruths ; falsehood and artifice never abandon her ; and, in spite of the violence of her passions, which is extreme, she is continually employed either in exaggerating their force, or dissembling their empire over her. When a person of this character is well known, all the blandishment of wit and beauty cannot render an intercourse either agreeable or piquant. This I experienced with regard to Armo-flede. Never believing, or only half believing whatever she said to me, I heard her without curiosity or interest ; besides, being entirely unmixed before me, she had no longer the attraction of vanity to recommend her. It was no longer in her power to assume a modest, tender, or ingenuous part ; it is delicacy which furnishes love with an inexhaustible source of delicious sensation, and with sentiments ever new. Delicacy appears the peculiar province of that charming sex, nor can it be violated without the loss of every thing that is graceful and engaging ; in fine, Armo-flede unveiled, having nothing to recommend
her

her but what she possessed in common with the most licentious courtesan, showed that the monotony of vice can become equally insipid and disgusting. I did not produce the like effect upon her ; for, growing the more wild for me as she saw my passion decrease, she so far forgot herself as to declare one day to me that she was not married, and very seriously offered me her hand. I made no other reply to this proposal than a loud laugh, and availed myself of the occasion to break off an intrigue of which I was most heartily tired. ‘ Let us be consistent,’ said I, ‘ for after the display you have made of your character, what charms can you see in a legitimate union ? ’ ‘ You alone suit me,’ replied she, ‘ and not being able to gain your attachment, I would wish to chain you.’ ‘ A pretty answer, truly,’ returned I ; ‘ but, fair Armoslede, you labour under a great error, and I ought not to leave you any longer the dupe of it. Intoxicated with love, and in order to please you, I have assumed a character of which indeed you approve, but which is not my real disposition. We have a hundred times observed, that all kind of deception is allowable in love, all scruple in that regard is folly. The principles which I imbibed from you have emboldened my timidity, and I have deceived you.’—‘ How ? ’—‘ I have boasted of a strength of mind I do not possess. I must avow to you, that I give encouragement to almost all the prejudices which you despise ; I may shake them off for a moment, but their influence over me quickly returns ; in fine, I confess that in my eyes Virtue is not a chimera ; she appears to me as necessary to the happiness of life, as the respiration of wholesome air is to health ; to abjure her is to disorganize the soul ; admiration cannot be withheld from her ; she must either be followed or regretted.’—

“ This

" This moral discourse produced the effect I expected ; Armoflede considered the eulogium on virtue as an outrage ; she burst into a violent passion, I took no pains to soothe her, and broke with her without any kind of ceremony. Since this rupture she has frequently offered me my pardon ; for some months indeed she even followed me, and played two or three farcical scenes of rage and jealousy, but all these attempts have been without success. After having shaken off these shameful fetters, my sole object was the recovery of that tender heart I had so deeply wounded. I thought I remarked, that Bertha appeared gratified at the affiduity and timidity of my conduct towards her, for I did not venture either to approach or to address her ; but my melancholy carriage was sufficiently expressive of what I suffered. At the end of some months, I perceived that her resentment was almost subsided. I then ventured to write again, and she returned my letters as before ; I sought opportunities of speaking to her in private, and she now began to avoid me with the greatest care. I again became reserved, and she ceased to shun me ; when I made fresh attempts, she invariably had recourse to the same conduct. I had almost given up all hopes of success, when the report of the enterprise of the princes confederated against Beatrice became the topic of general conversation at court. The emperor declared, that as soon as count Thederic* should return from an expedition, which was now drawing near to a conclusion, he would send him at the head of some troops to the succour of the duchess of Cleves ; and in the mean while that generous prince dispatched Archambaud to her, whom he had charged to offer assistance in money ; which, how-

* I have already mentioned in a note, that Thederic was one of the generals and friends of Charlemagne.

ever, the duchess did not accept. One evening when I was at the princess Bertha's apartments, the conversation ran as usual upon Beatrice and Gerold, and on the unaccountable procedure of the latter, who, at the moment of obtaining the hand of her he adored, sent her a letter to break off the match, the contents of which he in vain revoked a fortnight after. The whole circle, as they blamed the count of Bavaria, maintained, that ambition alone had incited him to hostile measures ; and that, having broken with the duchess in so formal a way, it was impossible he could have conceived any real passion for her. I was singly of a contrary opinion ; I insisted that a strong passion was no certain security for consistency in a lover's conduct ; and I added, that, since the duchess was inexorable, it was a proof she had never loved. As Bertha kept silence during this discussion, I ventured to address myself to her, and to request her opinion. ‘ I believe,’ replied she, blushing, ‘ that the more we love the greater value we set upon our lovers esteem, and that, when he is guilty of the most offensive conduct, love itself has still indulgence in store, though the exercise of it may be degrading.’ This reply, so full of delicacy and sentiment, restored my hopes, and inspired me with gratitude and joy. I was so affected, that I did not venture to add a word more ; But Bertha read my heart, and on that very evening I received a billet from her which contained these words.

‘ Go and defend an oppressed princess, go and overcome a faithless lover.—Set off without either seeing me again or writing to me.—When the duchess of Cleves shall be delivered from her persecutors, return, I shall receive you, and you shall be heard—and, if you ask me for an answer, I shall then only consult my heart.’

“ I obeyed,

"I obeyed, and departed the same night. I did not write to her, but Lancelot, who had determined to follow me, set out a day later, in order to give the princess an account of my prompt submission to her orders." When Angilbert had finished his story, they began to speak again of Armoflede, and it was decided, that she should no longer be permitted to remain at the castle. "I will take upon myself," said Angilbert, "to make her choose some other abode. I shall prevail upon her to declare her sex to the princess, and request to retire to the house of an old woman named Marcelina, who has been lately condemned to perpetual exile. This house is far enough from the camp to be free from all danger ; besides, we can inform the princes, through Giaffar, that it serves as an asylum to a young person under the protection of the duchess, and they will certainly give orders to their troops to keep at a distance from it." This project was approved, and on the following day put into execution. Armoflede, perceiving she would be compelled to follow the counsel that was given her, complied with a good grace ; she invented a long story, which she related to the princess, and having obtained the house of the old sorceress, she took up her abode there without delay.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE WAR AND THE PEARL NECKLACE.

O tems ! ô jours heureux où la forge innocente,
Ne brulant que pour rendre une moisson moins lente,
Enfantoit seulement des fœs et des rateaux !

REGNARD.

L'amour dans sa prudence est toujours indiscret.

Suréna de CORNEILLE.

The truce drew near its conclusion, and the duchess of Cleves, having lost all hopes of obtaining peace, gave herself up a prey to sorrow. She had given Delia a villa, situate in the midst of the forest; thither Delia, accompanied by Amalberga, often retired in quest of solitude. Two or three days in each week she passed here in absolute seclusion; and Beatrice, oppressed with disquietude and grief, shut herself up with her two friends during the last three days of the truce.

In the mean time the allied princes assembled in council for the last time; and, notwithstanding all the efforts of Barmecide, war was decided upon. At the close of this meeting Barmecide thus expressed himself. “ As for myself, I swear by all that is honourable, grateful, and friendly, never to quit the count of Bavaria during the engagement, and to defend him at the risk of my own life; but at the same time, I swear to confine myself merely to the act of defence, and I engage myself in the most solemn vow never to make any attack during the course of this unjust war (23).” This speech only excited murmurs, and it was agreed upon to send Beatrice, the day after the morrow, a formal declaration of hostilities. The allies had no uneasiness relative to the success of this war; their superiority

riority in number, the ability of their generals, the excellent discipline of their troops, all promised the most brilliant success. The prince of Greece had arrived at their camp at the head of a body of men. He was accompanied by Adalgise, whom he had met in his way, and who had joined him, together with some other knights, and among the rest the famous Bruhier, a warrior terrible for his valour, his bodily strength, and his gigantic stature (24). It was known in the camp, that all the subjects of the duchess had flown to arms, and that the desire of defending her inspired such an enthusiasm, that old men and children enlisted with all the ardour which distinguished the youthful part of the community ; but the allies affected to despise soldiers without experience, and each chief secretly indulged all the flattering hopes which love and ambition could prompt. The duchess had just published a manifesto, which crowned the admiration she had already acquired. In this proclamation Beatrice gave an account of every effort she had tried to obtain peace. In entering into the detail of her conduct and that of the allies, she demonstrated, in the clearest manner, the injustice and the violence of their proceedings. But she contented herself with stating facts, and, far from making any reflections, or using any injurious expressions, she spoke of her persecutors in terms of esteem ; she knew that the language of moderation is always the most persuasive, and the only language which is consistent with true dignity. She knew that it was glorious to conquer an enemy, and not to insult him ; and, in fine, that manifestos ought not to resemble libels.

On the day which preceded the expiration of the truce, Beatrice returned to the castle. In the evening that princess, together with the ladies of her court, and the knights clad in armour, assembled in a spacious gallery. There all the knights renewed
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the oath of combating for the duchess, and not to leave her before she was delivered from her persecutors. The duchess and the ladies then fastened to the shields and lances of the knights various ornaments taken from their dress: one gave a knot of ribbands, or piece of a scarf; another a necklace, or a chain. Many presented the golden clasps which fastened their vestments. The duchess, who first began to make the presents, conferred a magnificent one upon each knight; but when she came near Oliver, stopping short, with the tenderest looks, "The black crape," she said, "which covers your buckler, seems to announce your aversion to its being ornamented, and we ought to respect your inclination; but I cannot give up my right, or the satisfaction of offering you some pledge of my esteem and gratitude, and I flatter myself you will do me the favour to accept a courser, which will be presented to you to-morrow*." At these words Oliver bowed respectfully, and the princess, advancing towards Isambard, who was near his friend, took from her wrists two superb bracelets, set with emeralds and opal, and presented them to him. It was remarked, that this gift was the most valuable she had conferred, and jealousy observed with no less chagrin, that the hands of Beatrice, as she was endeavouring to tie on these bracelets, trembled to such a degree, as to render her unable to fasten them to Isambard's shield. Another ceremony of chivalry succeeded to this; Angilbert and Lancelot declared they would for ever unite themselves together in the sacred alliance of brothers in arms. They held each other by the hand, and Angilbert first speaking, made the following oath. "In the name of all which religion, honour, and virtue, hold most sacred, I engage myself for ever, to unite my fortune, ambition,

* A horse of parade was called a *palfrey*, and battle horse a *courser*.
and

and glory with thine ; always to partake thy toils and dangers, to second thee in all thy enterprizes, to leave every thing to defend or deliver thee. I promise never to flatter thy passions, to speak always the truth to thee, at the risk even of incurring thy displeasure ; and if thou shouldest go astray, to excuse thee, to lament thy errors, and to use every means of giving thee consolation. Henceforward, thy friends and thy enemies shall be mine ; and the benefit, or injustice, which thou shalt experience, shall inspire either the highest degree of gratitude, or the most violent resentment, which my heart can be capable of feeling."

Lancelot repeated this oath in the same words. The two friends then embraced, and made an exchange of their arms, which closed the ceremony(25). The moment the company returned to the saloon, the venerable Theobald, attended by his fair daughter Sylvia, appeared. The old man, having no farther hopes of serving the duchess by his negotiations with the princes, came to partake her danger, and to shut himself up in the castle with his sovereign.

The next morning one of the duchess's squires waited upon Oliver, to request him to go down into the court, which was under his windows, and there the knight of the Swan was presented with the most beautiful steed he had ever beheld, together with a pair of golden spurs, and a housing embroidered with pearls and precious stones. The extreme magnificence of this present was not what most struck Oliver ; he cast his eyes upon two rows of large pearls, which bordered the top of the housing, and which he remembered, in an instant, to have seen round the duchess's neck ; and he recollect~~ed~~ he had heard her one day mention to Delia, that she received this necklace from her father, and that it was the only trinket for which she had any regard.

While he was considering these pearls with inexpressible emotion, the squire addressing him said, " You may boast, seignior, of possessing the finest horse in the world. Having been commissioned by the princess six months ago to purchase the best horse I could find, I fell upon this by chance, as he was being led to the camp for the count of Bavaria. The princess offered so large a sum for the steed, that she obtained the preference ; but, though we were assured that he was completely managed, she was determined to have no doubts in that regard, and every morning at sun-rise she caused him to be exercised in her presence." This detail did not contribute to restore the tranquillity of Oliver's agitated mind ; he stood motionless, with his eyes still fixed upon the necklace, and kept profound silence : hence the squire concluded, that this knight was fonder of pearls and diamonds, than of horses. He retired much disgusted, and told the duchess, in a peevish manner, that the knight of the Swan, disdaining the most complete courser in Europe, had only taken notice of the housing ; but this account had an effect far different from what the squire imagined it would produce. It was now incumbent on Oliver to return thanks to Beatrice ; and after much trouble and reflection, he had prepared a speech, which he thought suitable to the occasion, but unfortunately he could not proceed beyond the first two or three syllables. He stopped, for he had forgotten what he intended to say. Beatrice blushed—both looked at each other without uttering a word, Oliver started, lifted up his eyes to heaven, and hastily withdrawing, went out of the saloon. He returned in half an hour ; several persons had come in and surrounded the duchess. Amalberga called Oliver to shew him a miniature portrait of Delia, which Beatrice had painted. Oliver equally admired the beauty of the execution, and the exactness

ness of the resemblance. "Ah! how happy," said he, sighing, "is it to possess the picture of a beloved object!"—He said no more, and these words he uttered with a low voice, but they were heard and noticed. The rest of the evening passed away in a gloomy manner; all the ladies, especially Beatrice, were oppressed with the deepest melancholy. It was known, through a deserter from the camp, that the allies intended to make an assault the next morning. The assault was made, but without success. The besieged made a sally, and engaged in a long and bloody battle. The king of Pannonia received several wounds, and all the champions of Beatrice combated with heroic ardour; but the knights of the Swan even surpassed themselves, and performed such prodigies of valour, that this combat alone would have sufficed to immortalize them. In the midst of the fray, Oger, who had long endeavoured to approach the count of Bavaria, at last found himself near him; then addressing him, "Prince," said he, "I challenge you to single combat, on a double motive; to defend the duchefs of Cleves, and avenge the unfortunate Maria."—At the name of Maria the count, being equally surprised and affected, lost in an instant all the ardent courage he had been showing in battle; but soon recovering from his embarrassment, "I accept your challenge," replied he. At the same instant the battle was suspended, the warriors fell back into their ranks, a large space was left open, and the two heroes advancing with noble and stately looks, saluted both armies, and then fell with impetuosity upon each other. After an obstinate combat in which Oger was wounded, both warriors, in a violent shock, broke their lances at the same instant. They were then separated, and the battle became general (26). The youthful Zemni, animated by his master's example, distinguished himself in a singular manner. Coming near the formidable Brubier,

hier, the gigantic stature of that warrior did not damp his ardour. Bruhier smiled at the youth and size of his adversary, and out of generosity, not unusual in those times, he chose to lay aside the terrible weapon with which he commonly fought; he gave his battle lance to his squire, and took a small and light one in its stead, which he only employed in warding off the strokes of his antagonist (27). The latter, observing how he spared him, went in quest of some warrior whose strength was more proportioned to his own. The vindictive Adalgise several times passed the ranks, in hopes of meeting Isambard, and, mistaking Oliver for his friend, he began to attack him. The knight of the Swan overturned him with a single stroke of his lance, and he was rescued by his suite, on the point of being taken prisoner. Oliver however seized his courser, which was magnificently set out with trappings, and gave him into the charge of one of his squires. Adalgise, mounting another horse, met Grimaldo duke of Benevento, his brother-in-law. The attachment of the latter to Charlemagne inspired the Lombard prince with implacable hatred, and he fell upon him with fury. Grimaldo, knowing him by his armour, and especially by the violence of his deportment, combated him with regret; but the Greek soldiers under the command of Adalgise, being repulsed by Isambard, began to fall back with great confusion. Adalgise quitted his adversary in order to rally his broken troops; Isambard pursued them; at this moment the prince of Greece came up with a corps de reserve, the routed troops returned to their ranks, and the knight of the Swan, notwithstanding his great valour, was on the point of being hemmed in on all sides, when Oliver, attended by Zemni and two squires only, flew to his relief with such impetuosity, that the enemy's ranks instantly gave way and relapsed into their former confusion. A second

cond time was the imperial eagle of the ancient Cæfars seen to fly before the French. The soldiers, feized with a panic, abandoned their leaders. Adalgise made his escape ; but Oliver, falling upon prince Constantine, made him his prisoner. While these transactions were going forwards in the centre of the army, the four sons of duke Aimon, with Angilbert and Lancelot, obtained a similar success in the left wing. Oger, Archambald, Astolpho, and young Roger, commanded the right with equal advantage and glory. Oger, having received but a slight wound, had resolved not to leave the battle. Although he had lost much blood, and was greatly weakened, yet, impelled by his ardour, he advanced into the front ranks of the enemy with too much temerity. Bruhier attacked him and made him his prisoner. In the mean while, Gerold and the other chiefs, observing the day to be lost, caused a retreat to be sounded, and it was made with order and ability worthy of the courage which had been displayed in the battle.

Night approaching, the conquerors collected their scattered troops, and entered the castle in triumph. The duchess, pale and trembling, and supported by two of her attendants, came to meet them at the foot of the grand stair-case. Oliver presented to her the prince of Greece, his prisoner ; Isambard, Guichard ; and many others laid at her feet the standards and colours taken from the enemy. Beatrice was too much agitated and too deeply affected to thank her defenders in any other manner than by the moving expression of her countenance. All the court repaired to the grand gallery. All the soldiers that the room could contain were admitted, the rest remained in the vestibules, which communicated with the gallery by large arcades ; there, according to the military customs of the ages of chivalry, the heralds at arms were to award the prize of

of valour to the warrior who had most distinguished himself in battle (28). Already the heralds were advancing towards Oliver, and the whole assembly anticipated their judgment. The soldiers and knights all cried out with one voice, that Oliver had deserved the prize. Then the duchess came up to him. Oliver knelt one knee on the ground before her, Beatrice presented him with a branch of laurel, and a beautiful ruby which she took from her finger ; she then held forth her hand, which the conqueror was entitled to kiss ; and at the same instant a concert of music celebrated the triumph of the knight of the Swan in warlike strains. His generous rivals all pressed to embrace him ; the soldiers applauded his glory with shouts of joy, and the name of Oliver resounded through all the quarters of the palace. Oliver was deeply affected, he was astonished to find himself again alive to glory, and, no longer recognising his own heart, he feared more than ever to commune with and interrogate it. The company sat down to table, and Beatrice placed Oliver and the prince of Greece on each side of her. The latter she treated with a generosity which was natural to her, and which the manners of the times prescribed. To respect a vanquished enemy, to mitigate the sense of his misfortune by marks of esteem, and the most delicate attentions ; to combat with intrepidity, and triumph with modesty ; such did these ancient warriors, although *totally unversed in philosophy*, consider as sacred and indispensable obligations (29).

During the repast, Oliver for the first time spoke to Beatrice, without being previously addressed by her : he asked her whether the success of the day had not entirely dissipated her alarms. " Ah ! " replied she, " this day has proved the most brilliant of my whole life.—But had you felt what I suffered during the battle ? "—These few words said much,

but

but the tone of her voice and her looks still expressed something more.—Oliver cast down his eyes, which were wet with tears; the duchess soon changed the conversation, and after having spoken of various indifferent things, she remarked to Oliver how greatly Delia was altered. “The condition in which I saw her, while the battle lasted,” added Beatrice, “has confirmed me in the opinion I had before entertained, that she is in love with Lancelot; for a vague and general concern, however strong it may be, cannot produce such an excess of sensibility.” These words made Oliver start; impelled by an irresistible movement he lifted up his eyes to look at the duchess; but she had her face turned towards prince Constantine, and remained some time in this attitude. Oliver took no farther part in the conversation; a violent fluttering at the heart, and the confused state of his ideas, allowed him neither to answer, nor even to hear what was said around him. Yet that state of trouble and agitation of mind was not wholly devoid of delight, and, for the first time since his misfortune, he now felt an ardent emotion accompanied with a secret joy. The conversation became general, and then suddenly turned upon the challenge which Oger had given to Gerold. No one having heard the story of the unfortunate Maria, the company were at a loss to account for the warm interest which Oger took in behalf of that unknown lady; after making many conjectures, they changed the topic, and when they were about to retire, Delia, in endeavouring to rise, fell down again upon her seat, and fainted away. The duchess flew to her assistance, and, seeing her fallen into a deep swoon, was extremely frightened, and had her carried to her chamber, whither she herself accompanied her. This accident greatly alarmed Lancelot; but Oliver, who was this evening more obliging than common, experienced great de-

light

light in dispelling the uneasiness of Lancelot, and communicating to him what the duchefs had been mentioning respecting Delia. Beatrice did not return to the saloon. Theobald brought a message from her to the knights, informing them she had commissioned him to go the next morning to the camp, to proffer the Prince of Greece in exchange for Oger. Oliver, before he retired to his chamber, ordered his squires to lead the fine horse he had taken from prince Adalgise to Roger's pavilion. Roger accepted the magnificent present with gratitude unmixed with embarrassment ; for in those times the most wealthy knight bestowed gifts without ostentation upon the poorest, who received the favour without any humiliation. That false delicacy so distressing to friendship, so troublesome to generous minds, and which pride and avarice have since made a virtue, was then utterly unknown *.

Let us for a moment leave the brilliant court of Beatrice to see what was passing in the enemy's camp. Bruhier being the subject of the count of Bavaria, his first care after the retreat was to conduct his illustrious prisoner into Gerold's tent. The prince appeared to be troubled at the sight of Oger, but he expressed the most flattering esteem for him. " We owe," said he, " the honour of receiving the valiant Oger into our camp, solely to the rashness of his courage, and if we detain him, it may be thought that I am fearful of renewing the combat to which he challenged, and which our broken arms did not allow us to continue. I feel how inferior my own talents are to those of so renowned a knight, but I had rather incur a glorious defeat, than the imputation of cowardice. You are therefore at liberty, and to-morrow, at the first beams of day,

* In combats, says Mr. de St. Palaye, the wealthy knights bestowed upon the poorest the horses and other spoils of war. This generosity became in general use, and it was observed in every circumstance of life, &c. (See Memoirs of Ancient Chivalry, Vol. I.)
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the heralds at arms shall conduct you back to the castle of Cleves." On finishing these words, the count made a sign to Bruhier and the other officers, to leave the tent ; and when he was alone with Oger, he entreated him to declare how he had known Maria, and to inform him of the place of her retreat. Oger, touched at the generosity of the prince, related to him without any evasion, in what manner he had learnt the story of that unfortunate fair one. During this relation Gerold, who was deeply affected, could not refrain from tears. " Ah seignior," said Oger, " is it possible your great mind can only indulge a momentary compassion for the interesting and unhappy Maria ! You forsake that tender heart which you yourself wring with anguish ; and you forsake it for a chimera ; for the Duchess of Cleves will never consent to give you her hand." " Well," replied Gerold, " read then my heart, it is certain I have never felt a violent passion but for the duchess ; you know that incomparable woman, and ought to conceive how much time and how many struggles it must cost to shake off her chains. I no longer entertain any hope, yet I love her to distraction. I could wish, at least, that her destiny depended on me ; I would willingly be the arbiter of her fate ; then would she do justice to my sentiments, I should obtain her esteem, and gratitude perhaps would produce what love has been unable to effect : but, in spite of this passion to which I am a slave, the remembrance of Maria incessantly pursues me. Believe me, were I to find her again, I should make no hesitation to sacrifice to her every other consideration ; and be assured too, that she alone in all the world would be able to console and cure me. Ah ! had I known the elevation of her tender and generous soul, never should I have had the ingratitude and cruelty to declare to her, that in promising to marry her, I laboured under an invincible passion for

for another.—The error of a moment has for ever destroyed the felicity of Meinrad and Maria, but I myself am more to be lamented than these two victims of my baseness. I have betrayed my friend: I have seduced a child. Meinrad in the gloom of a cloister is for ever before my eyes; and Maria too, wandering and disconsolate! Maria so young, so beautiful, so ingenuous!—I have no other companions but these distracting thoughts, embittered by a passion unencouraged by hope.—Ah, be assured, that Meinrad and Maria are sufficiently avenged.” On saying this, the count let fall his face upon his two hands, and remained in that attitude several minutes. Oger then declared he had made a point of concealing this melancholy story, that he had related it to no one, and that the duchess had not the least intimation of it. This assurance gave great satisfaction to Gerold, he spoke again of Beatrice, and then of Delia. Oger told him, that this young lady lived much retired from the court, and passed the greater part of her time in a house the duchess had given her for a retreat. The conversation of the count and Oger lasted a quarter of an hour longer; when Oger, much delighted at the courteous behaviour of Gerold, retired to taste the sweets of repose, of which he stood in such great need. The next day at sunrise the knight arose, and waited upon the count, to take his leave; the latter made him several magnificent presents, and put round his neck a beautiful row of topazes, saying to him, according to the spirit of gallantry which prevailed in these times, that he gave him this to present to the lady by whom he was beloved. At length, after lavishing upon the Danish knight every mark of distinction and friendship, Gerold himself accompanied him out of the camp, and commissioned him to demand of the duchess a cessation of arms for the purpose of paying the last honours to the warriors who had fallen in battle. At a little distance from the castle Oger met Theobald

Theobald, who was going to the camp to propose the exchange of prince Constantine and Oger. Greatly astonished to see the latter, Theobald asked him how he had obtained his liberty, and he heard with great pleasure of the generous procedure of Gerold. He returned to the castle with the Danish knight, whose arrival occasioned equal joy and surprise. Beatrice, after having heard the relation of Oger, was resolved not to be outdone in generosity, and she immediately caused the prince of Greece to be informed, that he was no longer a prisoner. The prince came to return her thanks ; she announced to him the suspension of arms, and pressed him to remain a few days at her court. Constantine, already full of admiration of the duchess, accepted the invitation with pleasure, and in cultivating further acquaintance with her, he became completely disgusted with the unjust cause in which he had taken arms.

CHAPTER XIV.

A MISTAKE, A FALSEHOOD, A FAULT.

Toute blancheur cède à l'éclat du fard,

Et la nature éblouit moins que l'art.

J. B. ROUSSEAU.

Age des passions, trop aveugle jeunesse,

Ou conduis-tu les coeurs à leurs penchans livrés.

VOLTAIRE.

THE count of Bavaria gave way to much melancholy reflection after the interview he had with Oger, and, recalling to mind all the detail of it, he was sorry he had not made more particular inquiry concerning Delia ; but not having spoken of her till towards the end of the conversation, he was unwilling to detain Oger any longer. Every thing he had heard of Delia, and principally the account which

Barmecide

Barmecide had given him of his interview with her, excited in his breast the most tender concern, and the most eager curiosity. He suddenly recollect ed that the duchess had asked him to give orders to his soldiers to respect the asylum of the young lady she protected, and whose retreat was a country villa. The name of the lady had not been mentioned, but Oger had just informed Gerold, that Delia frequently secluded herself from society. On combining these two facts, the count had no longer any doubt but that Delia was the object of her care. Oger had not denoted the house; but the count imagined he himself knew where it was situate, Beatrice having given him all necessary particulars relative to the habitation of the person in whose behalf she solicited his protection. The count, prompted by eager curiosity, conceived the project of making a visit to the lady whom he imagined to be the interesting and beautiful Delia. The cessation of hostilities favoured his intentions; and the hopes of meeting the duchess alone and without any retinue, at this house, confirmed his resolution. As soon as night came on, he mounted his horse, left the camp without being observed, and repaired alone to the habitation to which Armosfede had been banished. It was now the end of January; the snow, the glazed-frost, and the piercing coldness of the air, rendered this short journey extremely painful.

The count at length arrived, and knocked at the door. He was made to wait a considerable time; and he heard great bustle and confusion in the house. Some one from within, however, came to the door; but the count was required to give his name before it could be opened to him. Perishing with cold, and out of all patience at this delay, he announced his name; a new bustle was then heard in the house, and an instant after, a person returned to the door, and the count was let in. Gerold hastily passed through

through a vestibule into a small and dark antichamber, at the end of which sat a young female, who arose and met him as he entered.—He had only an imperfect sight of her, but she appeared very charming to him. He approached, and saluting her in the most respectful manner, “I flatter myself,” said he, “that the beautiful Delia will attribute the temerity of this visit to gratitude only, I was dying with impatience to thank her in person for the interest she deigns to take in my concerns.”—This introductory speech strangely surprised Arnoflede; but, instantly imagining this would turn out an amusing scene, she determined, without any hesitation, to confirm Gerold in his mistake. She made no reply, and assumed the attitude and deportment of a timid, bashful, and affrighted maiden. She shewed him on before her, and said something in a whisper to a servant who attended her, and at the same instant entered with Gerold into an apartment which was well lighted up. The count gazed with eagerness on the lady he took for Delia; she did not seem so young as he had been told, but he was enchanted with the graces of her person. Arnoflede, after having in silence and with downcast eyes undergone this examination, began to speak, and in faltering accents begged the count to be seated on a sopha; after which she sat down by him. Her embarrassment surprised and interested Gerold: the more he looked at her, the handsomer she seemed; his fancy had not represented Delia to him under so animated a form, he found her indeed less beautiful, but more agreeable than he had imagined. In the mean while, Arnoflede, beginning to take courage, ventured to lift up her eyes, and even to fix them upon the count of Bavaria. He was handsome, and in the prime of youth; and the looks of Arnoflede expressed *ingenuously* the effect he produced upon her. Gerold forgot to speak of Beatrice; the desire of making himself

himself agreeable to Delia now engrossed all his attention. He said every thing which gallantry could inspire, and then took occasion to ask her in what part of his dominions she was born. "Signior," replied Armoſlede, "I am not a native of that part of your territories which lie upon the frontiers of the duchy of Cleves; I have the happiness to call the place which bears your name my country; I was born in the county of Bavaria. My parents insisting upon my marrying a man I disliked, I escaped their tyranny by flight, and under a borrowed name I have taken refuge at this court. I shun the world, I live in solitude, and in this retreat I feel additional satisfaction in considering that I am here under your protection, since you have given orders that my asylum should be respected." This answer, which contained so many tender things for the count, increased his astonishment and his prepossession in her favour. "How greatly," said he, "is the man to be lamented who has not been bleſt with your approbation, and from whom you are now flying!—But why, charming Delia, did you not make application to me? My authority might have been useful to you."—"To you! great God!" cried Armoſlede. The vehemence of this exclamation, and afterwards the excessive embarrassment with which Armoſlede was seized, seemed to Gerold a kind of explanation; he fancied that he himself was loved by this young lady, who, probably, upon his reputation, had given herself up to a romantic paſſion, which ſhe nourished without hope, and which occaſioned that apparent insenſibility and the melancholy with which ſhe was taxed. Gerold recollecteſt that Barmecide, after his interview with Delia, had entertained that notion, and he himself had now no doubt of it. The singularity of this paſſion, and the charms of her who felt it, the virtue, the innocence he ascribed to her, all combined to excite the attention and flatter the self-

self-love of the gallant and fickle count of Bavaria. He affected not to have comprehended the meaning of the imprudent exclamation ; he was anxious to extort a more formal avowal, and imagining he was taking the advantage of unsuspecting innocence, he had recourse to much art, to fall himself into the snares of vice and imposture. His sole design was to secure his triumph over an ingenuous heart, and he forgot it was in this manner he seduced the unfortunate Maria. He asked Armoſlede ſome questions, and among others, how long he had been ſo happy as to interest her. "From the day, ſaid ſhe, "in which I had firſt the happiness of ſeeing you." "How," eagerly returned the count, much аſtoniſhed, "you have ſeen me then, and I was unacquainted with that honour?"—"You preſided at a public ceremony, and I was lost in the crowd."—"Ah, ſurely I ought to have diſtinguiſhed you there.—But —how long ago is this?"—"Two tedious years!"—"Permit me to ask one other question; I feel ſo ſtrong a deſire of being of ſervice to you, that I may conſider myſelf as having ſome claim to your conſidence."—On ſaying this, he feiſed her hand; that hand ſo remarkable for its beauty reminded him of Maria's. He fighed, but it was from emotion more than remorse.—"Charming Delia," continued he, "you have left your home to avoid a marriage your parents propoſed to you; but tell me, was your averſion the only cauſe of the violent reſolution you have taken?" Upon this Armoſlede, casting down her eyes, confeſſed ſhe loved another. "And how long have you loved him?" demanded Gerold. "For two years," replied Armoſlede in the moſt innocent manner. The anſwer was ſo plain and ſimple, that the count was perſuaded ſhe could not think it poſſible he ſhould imagine himſelf to be the happy man.—He ſtill pretended to have no ſuſpicion of this; and, after a moment's ſilence, occaſioned

fioned by a confusion which each moment increased, "I do not," replied he, "ask you whether you be beloved; to be assured of that, it is enough to hear and see you." Here Armoflede seemed unable to dissemble what she felt; she began to be quite agitated, she turned aside her head as if she would avoid the looks of Gerold; at last she arose, and with a faint voice begged to be allowed to retire a moment. At the same time she advanced a few paces, putting her handkerchief up to her eyes; the count rushed towards her, and seized both her hands; her face was uncovered, and he saw it was bathed in tears. Armoflede, in great alarm, exclaimed, "Ah, how cruel you are!" And Gerold, forgetting Beatrice and Maria, and all his love and remorse, fell upon his knees to Armoflede, who, all in tears, and unable to support herself, sunk gently into his arms.—At this instant was distinctly heard the pace of a horse on full gallop (for the room was on the ground floor, and lay towards the road), and in a moment the voice of Oger was recognised; who, before he came to the door, thus gave notice of his arrival, that he might not wait to be let in. The sound of that voice was a thunder-stroke for Armoflede; she knew that Oger had been taken prisoner, and she supposed him to be still in the enemy's camp. Full of disquietude and terrour, she broke from the arms of Gerold, hastily informing him, that Oger sometimes came to her from the duchess; that he was, without doubt, now charged with some commission; that she was obliged to receive him; that, should he see the count with her, he would mention it to Beatrice; and she then intreated him to go away through the back-door, or else conceal himself in her chamber, adding, that Oger would not stay long, that she would soon dismiss him. Gerold accepted the latter proposal. At this moment a servant entered, and inquired what answer was to be given to the Danish knight,

knight, who continued knocking violently at the door. Armoflede ordered him to be let in ; at the same time she led the count into a small passage, and there showed him her chamber ; and immediately returned back, shutting all the doors after her. The count opened the door he had been shown, and he entered the room, which was Armoflede's bed-chamber. A single taper placed on a table lighted the apartment, which was spacious. Gerold sat down, and beginning to reflect upon the whole of this adventure, the visit of Oger at eight o'clock at night appeared extremely extraordinary. He was acquainted with the delicacy and the strict principles of the duchess ; he could not conceive how she could have had the imprudence to send a knight upon these nocturnal errands, and thus expose the reputation of her young friend. Besides, he was much astonished, that the modest and timid Delia had proposed to him to wait in her bed-chamber till Oger was gone. While he was thus reflecting, he cast his eyes by chance upon the table near which he was sitting ; and perceiving something brilliant lying in an open casket, he looked, and instantly recognised the topaz chain which Oger had that same morning received from him. His astonishment was extreme ; for this incident left no doubt upon his mind of the intelligence between Oger and the pretended Delia.—Confounded, and equally piqued and surprised, the count arose from his seat in great agitation, and walked with hasty steps about the chamber. After a few turns, coming up to a window, the curtains of which were let down, he heard somebody sneeze and cough. He turned about, and perceived two feet under the curtain ; which the count immediately drawing aside, he discovered Sylvan, Oger's little page, whom he instantly recollect^{ed}, having seen him several times at Theobald's house during the late truce. This discovery appeared so ridiculous to Gerold, that it instantly

dispelled his ill humour ; he burst into a fit of laughter, and beginning to question Sylvan, the latter blushed and replied, that when the count came in, he ran and hid himself here instead of going away as he had been ordered. Gerold asked no farther questions. "I give you notice," said he, "that your master is now in the house."—At this Sylvan trembled, and was desirous of going away ; but the count taking hold of him, "Stop a moment," returned he ; "in what manner can you think of getting out without being observed ?"—"Through a back door of which I have the key," answered the page.—"Well," said Gerold, "you shall let me out too : you may rely on my discretion, but on condition that you yourself are discreet, and it is never discovered that you and I met together here." Sylvan promised secrecy. Gerold then wrote the following short billet : "I advise the *innocent* and *bashful* Delia to provide herself with a larger house ; her present habitation is much too small for *the kind of misanthropy* which detains her in solitude."

This billet he fastened to the topaz chain, and then went out with the young page. They passed through a vestibule which led to the back yard ; there Sylvan opened a door, and let the count and himself out upon a heath. The night was exceedingly dark : Gerold wandered twice round the house before he could find his horse, which he had tied to a tree. Sylvan assisted him in this search ; and coming at last to the tree, he untied the horse, and led him to the count. The latter, when Sylvan took leave of him, asked him what he intended to do, at this late hour, and without any horse. Sylvan replied, that he should wait till day-break at a cottage a little way off. The count, after having again urged him to be discreet, returned to the camp as much dissatisfied with his excursion, as surprised to have discovered in Delia, who had been represented to him in such an interesting point

point of view, nothing but hypocrisy and the most scandalous depravation of manners. He considered however, that the world might well be duped by her artifices, when he recollect ed how far he himself had admired her apparent candour and innocence, and that she had even appeared to him more tender-hearted and ingenuous than Maria herself. But he could not conceive how she could persist in disdaining the suit of Lancelot, a knight so commendable for the amiableness of his disposition, the brilliancy of his wit, and the graces of his person. Not being able to account for the motive of this odd aversion, he concluded, that women are inexplicable beings, and exclaimed, "O Beatrice, you alone are free from weakness and caprice ; and Maria alone is capable of loving!"—While discontent and ill-humour thus prompted the count of Bavaria to moralise, the Danish knight was still more unpleasantly situate. He had anticipated with great delight the idea of agreeably surprising Armoſlede by an unexpected return. Sylvan had not quitted his master during the battle, and had been taken prisoner with him : the next day, Oger, concealing from him that he had regained his liberty, had only observed that he was permitted to send his page on a commission ; and had dispatched him with the row of topazes to Armoſlede, and to inform her he hoped his captivity would not be of long duration. At the same time he forbade Sylvan to go to the castle ; and he gave him besides a second message, which would have taken up the remaining part of the day. The young page, equally enamoured and giddy, made no scruple of disobeying his master, or rather he forgot himself in Armoſlede's company. Oger, having taken all these precautions, arrived indeed without being expected ; but he could not have chosen a moment in which his visit was more unwelcome and disagreeable. Armoſlede, resolving at all events to get rid of him, had recourse to an expedient,

pedient, common now-a-days, but really sublime for those rude times ; she affected a violent attack of the nerves : she fell into such strong and well-varied convulsions, that the greatest adept in this way, of the present age, could not act a more natural or alarming scene. The good Danish knight, who had never seen any thing of the kind before, was overwhelmed with concern and disquietude, and began to call the servants. The disorder was new ; physic had not yet discovered a remedy for it ; and in those unenlightened days the essence of orange flowers was nothing more than a perfume, and linden-tree water was unknown !—In the space of half an hour, Armoflede was in a condition to declare to Oger, that she wished to go to bed ; that repose and sleep only could recover her. He was desirous to sit up with her ; but she assured him, that if he remained in the house, her emotion would be such as would not allow her to sleep : to this she added many passionate expressions ; and as she had still *writlings* and *startings* at command, Oger no longer insisted upon staying ; and full of attention, love, and regret, he returned to the castle, and determined never again to *surprise* and alarm a woman of such extreme sensibility. He arrived at the castle at ten in the evening. As he came into the court which led to his apartment, he called his squire, who instantly appeared with a light. Hambard, who lodged by him, was this moment going across the court ; he came up to Oger in order to rally him upon this nocturnal expedition. Oger alighted from his steed ; and his squire, looking at the animal, cried out, “ What, seignior, you have trucked your horse.” Upon this Oger looked, and saw another horse with trappings quite different from his own. He remained motionless with astonishment ; and the squire continued, “ The truck is good, the steed is the handsomer of the two, and the saddle infinitely more valuable than yours ; it has the colours

and

and cypher of the count of Bavaria; and I know his horse again, having seen the prince several times mounted upon him." Oger too recognised him, and continued bewildering himself in the reflections, to which this strange metamorphosis had given birth. Isambard had a glimpse of the real truth, and, being inclined to examine into this mystery, took Oger by the arm, and led him into his own apartment. Oger, naturally of a communicative disposition, replied without evasion to all Isambard's questions, and the latter had no doubt, but that Armoflede had found means to form an intrigue with the count of Bavaria. He did not dissemble his opinion to the Danish knight, who still continued to take the lady's part, allowing, however, that she was defective in principle, but maintaining, at the same time, that she was incapable of perfidy. "Believe me, my dear Oger," replied Isambard, "that a woman will deceive and betray without scruple, when she goes astray without remorse."

CHAPTER XV.

A VAIN RESOLUTION.

On brave un tems l'amour, mais enfin il se venge.

DESTOUCHES.

Serment d'aimer toujours, ou de n'aimer jamais,
Me paroit un peu teméraire.

VOLTAIRE.

THE flight impression, which the remonstrances of Isambard had made upon the mind of Oger, was quickly effaced by the conversation and falsehood of the artful Armoflede. On the departure of Oger she had found the count of Bavaria's billet in her chamber.

ber. At first her anger was equal to her confusion ; but afterwards, when she began to reflect, that Gerold had taken her for Delia, her atrocious mind felt consolation at the idea of an adventure, which dishonoured a young and innocent person, whom she inveterately hated.

In the mean while Oliver, more agitated than ever, was unable to chase away the reflections, which the remembrance of all he felt, on receiving from the duchess the prize of valour, excited in his mind. He still flattered himself, that in Beatrice he only adored the image of Celanira, and he continued to consider this new passion as nothing else than a proof of eternal constancy. But he could not deceive himself respecting the sentiments of Beatrice, and, being assured of her affection, he shuddered at thinking he was the rival of Isambard. This distressing idea awoke new remorse in his soul, and prompted him to make a resolution to shun with more than usual care, not only all private interviews with Beatrice, but every thing which might promote any intercourse at all with her. But, on this very day, as he was going along a gallery of the palace, he met her alone ; she was returning from the apartment of Theudon, whom she often went to see since he had been confined to his bed by a dangerous wound (30). Oliver, on perceiving the duchess, was going to retire ; she called to him, and, quickening her pace in order to overtake him, "I am happy to meet you," said she, "as I want to obtain your consent to something which I have much at heart." Oliver, surprised at this, requested to hear her commands. "I have remarked," replied she, "how fond you are of Zemni, and how strongly he is attached to you ; I confess I have more than once asked him some questions ; he has related his story to me, and from that moment I have felt great interest for a youth who owes his existence to the valour and generosity of Oliver.—

ver.—I am informed, that, in the late victory gained over our enemies, he displayed the most brilliant courage; I wish to confer upon him the honour of knighthood; does this obtain your consent?" Oliver, much affected, only sighed and bowed. "Well," said the duchess, "the cessation of arms will expire in five days; let Zemni know, that the day after tomorrow he shall be received into the order of chivalry." On saying this, Beatrice, without waiting for his answer, left the Knight of the Swan, and returned to her apartment. Oliver went eagerly in quest of Zemni, to inform him of the kindness of the princess. Zemni, being quite transported with delight, in the effusions of his gratitude entered into the most touching eulogium of the duchess's goodness. He mentioned many interesting traits of it; it was the first time he had indulged the pleasure of praising her to his master; for the striking resemblance of Beatrice to Celanira had always prevented him from speaking of her. Oliver listened with so much satisfaction to his discourse, that it engrossed all his attention till supper-time, and during the rest of the evening, he appeared abundantly more thoughtful and absent than usual.

After supper, Lancelot, leading Oliver into a closet near the saloon, requested him to take charge of a letter to Delia; for, of all the knights assembled at the castle, Oliver appeared to possess the greatest share of Delia's friendship; less bashful with him than with the rest, she frequently sat next him at table, and she admitted him often as a third person in the walks she took every morning with Amalberga. Oliver being less insociable to the friend of Beatrice, found a secret gratification in her society; moreover, the reserve and deep melancholy of that young lady inspired him with tenderness and concern. Lancelot believed himself loved by Delia; but, as she always shunned him, and as he never could attain to speak to her

her alone, he entreated Oliver to deliver a letter from him, which he had been just writing to her. The two knights agreed, that Oliver on the morrow should, instead of waiting for Delia in the garden, repair to her apartment an hour before the walk ; that he should then deliver Lancelot's letter, and speak to her in his behalf. On the next day Oliver, at ten o'clock, went to Delia's apartment for the first time ; for, notwithstanding the kind of intimacy which was established between them, as she did not receive visits, he had never been at her rooms. Coming to the door, and seeing no key in it, he was going to knock ; but the door, which was not fastened, opened the moment he put his hand to it : he then entered softly. Not finding any body either in the antichamber or the drawing-room, he concluded, that Delia was already gone out : casting his eyes, however, towards a closet, the door of which lay open, he entered it ; but scarcely had he put his foot within this closet, than he gave a loud cry, and staggered against the wainscot, where he remained motionless, and almost entirely deprived of the use of his senses. The surprising sight he beheld was indeed sufficient to produce such an effect upon him !—Of this the reader will judge in the next chapter, which contains the detail of this strange vision.

CHAPTER XVI.

DANGEROUS ILLUSION.

Manca il parlar ; di vivo altro non chiedi,
Ne manca questa ancor, se agli occhi credi.

Tasso.

LET the reader imagine, if it be possible, what Oliver must have felt, when, instead of her he was looking

looking for, he thought he beheld, not indeed the duchess of Cleves, but Celanira herself, just in the manner she appeared to him the first time he saw her in the princess Emma's apartment, and dressed in the fashion of her own country. As he entered this closet he beheld the image of Celanira in the same attitude, standing up, with her back turned towards him ; he recognised her shape, her head-dress, her long tresses of light hair, her clothes of the same form and the same colour ; in a word, he found her in every respect so resembling, that, in the first moment of inexpressible surprise, the idea of Beatrice never once entered into his imagination. At the cry he uttered she turned about, grew pale, and, being struck with astonishment almost equal to his own, she supported herself against a table, and looked steadfastly at him without saying a word.—Oliver seeing her face, and observing the paleness of it, and the colour of her hair, still imagined Celanira was before him. He contemplated her with distracted looks ; but at length the duchess breaking silence, " Oliver," said she, " chance has discovered a mystery to you, of which you yourself were the object.—I know how much you have regretted not having the picture of her you loved ; I wanted to furnish you with it. I was anxious, that the resemblance, which renders my sight so painful to you, might at least for once procure you some consolation. During the last fortnight I have come here every morning (having communicated my intentions to Delia only), to dress myself in these borrowed locks, and in this garb. My own person has served me for a model ; but, embellished by art, this portrait, which I have just completed, will remind you of nothing more of Beatrice than her tender friendship, while it presents to your eyes the loved features of Celanira." Thus speaking, the duchess presented the picture to the Knight of the Swan. Oliyer, all dismayed, fell at her feet, crying

out, "Ah! let me prostrate myself before her true image." Beatrice could only answer with tears. Oliver seized her two hands, and, pressing them against his heart, "Yes," continued he, "it is she, I see her again!—That look is hers!—her soul appears in those eyes!—O, thou dear object of all my adoration, tell me, if by a new prodigy thou art come to make amends for my long sufferings.—What, wilt thou fly me? art thou already going to disappear? No! no, I will follow thee into the darkness of the grave; death, which has separated us, ought at least to reunite us." At these words the duchess, in great terror breaking from his arms, "My dear Oliver," said she, "recognise the sad Beatrice, awake from this frightful error, put an end to a fatal and too dear illusion."—"Well then," interrupted the unhappy Oliver, "relieve me from the load of life."—On saying this, he threw himself upon a sofa which was near him, and, covering his face with his hands, he gave free scope to his tears. Beatrice, pale and shivering with terror, remained standing by him without venturing to open her lips.—"Ah! madam," returned Oliver with a voice interrupted by sobs, "what have you been doing?—It is not a remembrance only which you have been restoring me—You have taken her from the tomb, you have given her back to me.—I saw Celanira's eyes fix themselves upon mine—I felt her warm tears fall upon my face!—It was her trembling hand which I pressed to my bosom!—You have taken barbarous sport in re-kindling in this sad heart all the transports of love!—O, cruel Beatrice, you have only reanimated my existence in order to restore all the anguish of my former regret!" "O heavens," interrupted the duchess, shedding a flood of tears, "what killing reproaches are these!—But must I endeavour to justify myself?—Oliver! can it be possible, Oliver, that you have not yet read my heart?"—This question made Oliver start; he joined his hands

hands together, and, turning towards the duchess in a supplicating attitude, and with the most ingenuous expression of grief and tenderness, “ O deign,” said he, “ to bewail a lamentable error ; it is at your feet that I must implore forgiveness.—But can I again find myself there, without relapsing into this guilty delirium ?”—“ Is it Oliver,” replied Beatrice, “ who calls upon me to bewail him ? Can he be ignorant of the excess of the dangerous compassion with which he has been able to inspire me ? And when his pains and sorrows have passed into my own soul, when I partake of all he feels, can he still feign to misunderstand my sentiments ?” At these words, Oliver, quite beside himself raised his looks to Beatrice, on whom he had not yet dared to fix them since he had sitten down. “ Great God,” cried he, “ is this still an illusion ?”—“ No,” replied the duchess ; “ this heart, which has hitherto been so insensible, is wholly yours : may I hope, Oliver, that the tenderness and the hand of Beatrice might at last administer consolation to you ?” On uttering these words, she held out her hand. Oliver trembled, and the duchess observed with terror his brow begin to darken, his countenance alter, and assume the looks of despair. He took hold of her hand, and closely pressing it between his own, he kept silence a moment ; then looking at the duchess with a gloomy and disastrous countenance, “ This hand,” said he, “ this pure and beneficent hand cannot be united to that of a murderer. Celenira was my wife, her virtue was equal to her charms ; I was her assassin, it was I who killed her.”—At this terrible declaration the unfortunate duchess, who was seated on the sofa, let fall her head upon Oliver’s shoulder ; a thick cloud spread over her eyes, which were all bathed in tears ; and, no longer seeing or hearing the unhappy knight, a deep swoon suspended for a while the sorrow which had torn her heart. Oliver, on seeing Beatrice lying on his bosom, felt a

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sensation which is not to be described ; "Now," said he, "she knows my crime, she will feel nothing but horror on finding herself in my arms.—I have destroyed her tenderness, and lost her esteem !—Celanira ! Isambard ! O eternal and sacred remembrances, sustain my resolution."—On uttering these sorrowful complaints, Oliver had gently laid the duchess upon one of the cushions of the sofa ; she quickly recovered her senses ; the first word she pronounced was the name of Oliver, and her first look sufficiently indicated that her heart still remained unchanged. "Unfortunate Oliver," cried she, "the sentiments of Beatrice shall justify your generous confidence.—Ah, never let us speak of this heart-rending and terrible secret.—I am certain some fatal error was both the cause and excuse of that dreadful event, and the excess of your grief tends but to increase my attachment." These tender words excited the warmest sense of gratitude in the breast of Oliver. But, too deeply affected to make reply, he lifted his eyes to heaven in a manner so pathetic, that no words could better express what he felt. The duchess made a sign to him to sit down by her : "It is late," said she, "we must quickly separate ; and before I leave you, Oliver, I will lay open my soul to you. My character has always been ill understood ; delicacy, and not pride, has hitherto preserved me from love. In rejecting the vows of so many princes, I disdained only the pretensions of ambition and vanity ; I wanted a heart that was responsive to my own ; I have thought, that such a heart indeed existed, and the consideration, that in all probability I should never meet with it, has often disturbed the quiet of my mind. Perhaps, too, said I to myself, this object, capable of feeling an attachment like that of which I have formed an idea, is likewise vainly seeking for a heart resembling his own, or perchance is engaged by other ties ; perhaps the difference of our conditions in life,

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the wide distinctions of rank, will for ever keep us asunder and unknown to each other. This idea completely convinced me how absurd the prejudices of birth are ; and sentiment now confirmed the opinion, which reason had before suggested. Such was my situation when Oger the Dane arrived here ; he spoke to me of you, and from that instant my heart, which had been long in quest of such an object, divined you to be the lover I sought, and expected you. The powerful effect of compassion, the brilliancy of your reputation, the force of sympathy, the conformity of tastes and opinions, all have concurred to promote my attachment to you. I have thought you might have learned to love one, who recalled to your mind the dear object of your regret !—But I am now too well convinced, that you can no longer love, and that I must for ever give up all hopes of consoling you. I shall be able to triumph over a passion which you cannot share ; at least, it will for ever secure me from being the slave to another. However, I am in want of a friend and protector.—Oliver—can you refuse, upon such conditions, to remain with me ?”—“ Ah !” replied Oliver, “ could I be capable of forming a design of leaving you, as long as my services and my sword could be useful to you !”—“ They will ever be so,” returned Beatrice. “ Consider my situation, consider my youth ; should a glorious peace put an end to this unjust war, I shall find myself alone, and surrounded by ambitious neighbours more irritated than ever against me ; they will be desirous of avenging themselves of my triumph and refusal, war will be kindled afresh, and I shall be the victim of it. But, with the support of Oliver alone, I shall have nothing to apprehend, and of that support I can only assure myself by making him reign over the dominions which are subject to my sway. Could I make him my sovereign, or adopt him for a brother, I should not persist in offering him my hand ; but consider,

fider, Oliver, that with regard to the united interests of my reputation, my glory, and my safety, I have no other means of living with you as your sister. It is only at the foot of the altar that I can declare you the protector of this state, and my own."—At these words Oliver fell at the seat of Beatrice. "Sublime and generous woman," cried he; "what are you proposing?—No—the unfortunate, the guilty Oliver can never be honoured with the august name of your husband!—Ah! would you indeed become my sister!—Isambard, the most virtuous, the most amiable of men, dares to adore you in secret, and he is my brother."—"No more," interrupted the duchess arising from her seat, "let us forget this sad interview, be assured I shall never recall the remembrance of it to you; but I likewise expect, that you will never mention to me the name of Isambard." On finishing these words, the duchess, without looking at Oliver, moved to the other side of the cabinet, and opening the door, disappeared in an instant. Oliver continued in the greatest distress and consternation imaginable; he surveyed with a stupefied air the place which Beatrice had just quitted, and he could not tear himself from the fatal closet. At last, rousing up all his resolution, he advanced some steps towards the door; he suddenly stopped on the recollection of the picture which was left upon the table; he then seized it with a fluttering heart, and hastily went out of the chamber.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE DREAM.

Think me not lost : for thee I heaven implore!
To Thy guardian angel, though a wife no more!

SAVAGE.

Mira come son bella o come lieta
Fedel mio caro, e in me il tuo duolo acqueta.

TASSO.

OLIVER, unable to appear in public, passed the whole day in his chamber. Isambard and Roger were absent on a commission with which the duchess had charged them ; they were gone to meet the beautiful Axiana, countess of Carcassone, the celebrated widow of Balahac, who was expected on the following day. This princess, after the death of Balahac, had taken the command of his army, gained several battles, and made a glorious peace with the generals of Charlemagne (31). Having heard of the situation of the duchess of Cleves, she flew to her succour, notwithstanding the distance between their dominions, and was coming to range herself in the list of her defenders.

The absence of Isambard gave the unhappy Oliver full opportunity of indulging his grief, and giving way to melancholy reflections. A thousand violent and contrary sensations took place in his mind, when he ventured to contemplate the picture he had received from Beatrice. It was indeed the most striking likeness of Celanira. The duchess, in pourtraying her person, had been chiefly solicitous to catch the expression of it. The questions, she had so frequently asked respecting her unfortunate rival, had enabled her to make every alteration necessary to render the likeness perfectly exact. Oliver, in examining

ing the portrait, equally retraced the person of Celanira and Beatrice ; that ravishing face recalled to his mind at the same moment the form and the sentiments of the one and the other. If he thought on the virtues of Celanira, he could only compare them with those of Beatrice : if he thought of the love of the former, and of the tender sacrifices she had made for him, the thought naturally reminded him of Beatrice. He saw, he heard that charming princess make avowal of the purest and most tender passion for him, and, in spite of the prejudices of pride and birth, offer him, with equal delicacy and generosity, that hand which so many princes solicited, and which she had refused to one of the greatest kings of Europe. In a word, he could not look at the portrait without considering it the work of the ingenious tenderness of the duchess ; thus from this instant, in a more particular manner, were Celanira and Beatrice so united in his imagination, that it was no longer possible to separate them, and they both formed but one idea there. Notwithstanding the violent conflicts which tore his heart, and the sorrow that oppressed him on reflecting on the severity of Beatrice's late farewell, Oliver felt great comfort in the consideration of having done his duty, and that in this dangerous interview he had neither betrayed friendship, nor the fidelity he owed to the memory of his unhappy wife. In the evening he admitted Zemni into his chamber, and this was only to converse with him about the duchess ; from him he learnt, that she had complained of a violent head-ach, and that she was really much cast down and changed. This account gave Oliver so much pain, that he dismissed Zemni, under the apprehension of being unable to dissemble his feelings upon the occasion. When he was alone his tears began to flow afresh until the hour in which he was accustomed to retire to rest. On lying down to repose, and going to pass the night without Isambard, he

he was astonished not to find himself seized with those dreadful terrors which were used to lay hold of him on the approach of the punishment to which he was condemned. He lamented his destiny more than ever, but the sacrifice he had been making calmed the secret reproaches of his conscience, and he experienced that remorse alone inflicted insupportable terror. Scarcely was he in bed, but it seemed as if an invisible and beneficent hand poured a salutary balm into the deep wounds of his heart ; the calm of his mind called forth new sensations ; his soul, disengaged for a short interval from all human passions, soared to heaven ; Religion brought her consolations, and displayed her sublime hopes to his mind ; his ideas insensibly became more vague, he then fell into a pleasing reverie, his heavy eye-lids closed, and he was soon in the arms of sleep. For the first time since his misfortunes, his slumbers were now attended by happy dreams. He fancied himself transported into a beautiful garden at the moment in which Aurora shed her earliest beams of light. He was at the foot of a service-tree, upon the branches of which were hung the tresses and golden chain of Celanira, and the pearl necklace he had received from Beatrice. As he was contemplating with emotion these offerings of love, the sounds of celestial music smote his ear and engaged his attention. He lifted his eyes towards heaven, and perceived a luminous cloud, which seemed to approach him, and which left a trace of light as it passed along ; this cloud hovering over the service-tree stopped, and opening itself, discovered a divine form, which represented at the same moment to Oliver's imagination the adored image of Celanira and Beatrice. A melodious voice uttered these words : *Eternal justice is satisfied, thy repentance and constancy have expiated our faults.* Scarcely were these consolatory words pronounced, than Oliver saw Isambard and Beatrice near him, dressed in deep mourning,

ing, and prostrating themselves at the foot of the service-tree. Oliver cast his eyes upon the cloud ; he perceived Celanira, who stretched out her arms towards him ; he strove to rush to her embrace, but at this instant he awoke. How great was his surprise and his joy on not perceiving about him any of the vestiges of the horrible apparition which had hitherto haunted him, and on discovering the first beams of day. " She suffers no longer," cried he with transport ; and on uttering these words he sprung from his bed, and prostrated himself on the floor.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A HEROINE.

— Voi che oscurat vorefti
Con maligne ragioni
La gloria femminil, ditemi voi,
Se han virtu piu sublime i nostri eroi.

METASTASIO.

ON this day, so memorable to Oliver, was Zemni invested with the honour of knighthood *. The ceremony began at noon, and took place in the chapel of the castle. When all the company were assembled, and the duchefs had seated herself under a magnificent canopy beside the altar, Oliver appeared leading Zemni by the hand, who was clothed in white. The sponfor and the novice equally affected, but from different motives, approached the altar, and fell upon

* It was requisite to be turned of twenty-one, to be received into the order of knighthood ; but the sovereign had always a power of dispensing with the age of candidates, and often made use of that prerogative.

their

their knees ; the violent emotion of Oliver still increased when he found himself beside Beatrice at the foot of this altar—he thought that had he accepted her hand, in such an attitude should he have received her, on such a spot, and in such a place—Zemni, after having taken his oath, arose ; the ladies and the duchess advanced forwards ; the youthful Sylvia, the amiable daughter of Theobald, approaching Zemni in a gentle and bashful manner, fastened on the gilt spurs : they both blushed, and Sylvia, without venturing to lift up her eyes, hastened to withdraw and place herself behind the duchess. The other ladies presented Zemni with the hauberk, the breast-plate, and the gauntlets. Then Oliver led the novice under the prince's canopy. Zemni knelt down ; the prince took from the hand of one of her esquires a magnificent sword : *In the name of God*, said she, *I create you a knight ; be brave, hardy, and loyal**. On pronouncing this sacred injunction she girt him with the sword. The knights now formed a circle around Zemni, and presented him with his helmet, his shield, and his lance. The new knight received the embrace of all the warriors, of whom he was now become the equal, and the assembly then left the chapel. Zemni was conducted to a spacious court filled with soldiers. This multitude had been waiting with great impatience for the arrival of the new knight, who was now mounted upon his horse, and who, according to ancient custom, left the place of his reception attended by the people and a band of music, and shewed himself in public †. Barmecide, who was sent from the camp to propose an exchange of prisoners, had been present at the ceremony ; the duchess invited him to spend the rest of the day at the

* This was the usual formulary.

† All these particulars of the ceremony are taken from the Mem. of Ancient Chivalry, by Mr. de St. Palaye, Vol. I.

castle, in order to meet the famous countess of Carrassone, who was expected there in the evening. Barmecide informed Oliver, that a strange knight had arrived at the camp, that he had appeared in the dress and mantle of a knight-errant*; and that his services had been accepted. "But judge of my surprise and indignation," added Barmecide, "when coming hither this morning, and seeing this knight at a distance, I quickly recognised the ferocious Rotbold, and Tryphon his worthless squire. But these two monsters shall not long remain among us; I shall inform Gerold of their history." "No," returned Oliver, "it will be better to vanquish them than to have them dismissed; let them continue in the army, heaven, without doubt, has conducted them hither to receive the just punishment due to their crimes." While Oliver was thus speaking, Theobald came to inform him, that Beatrice had sent him to meet the countess, as a courier had just arrived, bringing information, that she would arrive in two hours. The old man invited the Knight of the Swan to accompany him. Oliver consented; and ordering the fine courser he had received from Beatrice to be brought, he mounted, and set off with Theobald, accompanied only by two squires. He conversed with the old man on indifferent subjects; when, perceiving him to listen with inattention, and to have his eyes fixed upon the housing of his steed, "You are admiring," said he, "the magnificence of this trapping; it is a gift of the princefs."—"Pray," interrupted Theobald with emotion, "lift up the fringe which half conceals those pearls."—Oliver obeyed, observing, that he must certainly know the pearls which Beatrice herself had worn. "Is this possible?" cried the old

* The knight-errants wore green garments, because (says Mr. de St. Pelage) green is the symbol of hope. These knights travelled in order to form themselves, and in quest of adventures: there were many knights of this kind during the early ages of chivalry.

man, " it is Beatrice's necklace ! O happy Oliver !" —He stopped, and his eyes ran o'er with tears. Oliver, equally uneasy and surprised, and eager to find out the mystery which the astonishment and tenderness of Theobald announced, began to question him with the more earnestness, as the squires were pacing gently behind, and too far off to hear them. He remained some minutes without making any answer ; at last, heaving a deep sigh, " Ah, Seignior," said he, " I am far from disapproving the choice of Beatrice. Having known that princess from her infancy, I had even begun to suspect her sentiments ; but mine has been the glory of forming that noble and sensible heart, and of developing those virtues, and that superior reason, which distinguish her from all persons of her rank *. Her confidence was due to me : it was the only valuable recompence she could make me for all my cares. How ought I to be afflicted on discovering, that she has concealed from me the most important secret of her life !" " O heavens !" said Oliver, " where are your thoughts leading you ; and how can this pearl necklace create such a mistake ?" " What, Seignior," replied Theobald, " did the duchess, when she made the present, forget to relate its history ; or rather do you imagine, that I am ignorant of it, or that so striking an incident should have escaped my memory ? No, Seignior, I know, that the late duke of Cleves received this necklace in his early days from the hands of a wife he adored ; that princess had presented it, before her marriage, as a pledge of her love, and made him promise to keep

* The reader must recollect, that we are talking of a princess of the ninth century. It is well known, that the princes and princesses of our own day are free from prejudices, see every thing with their own eyes, allow themselves to be governed by reason only, and know and fulfil the duties of justice, gratitude, and friendship ; but in the remote ages, of which I am sketching the history, they were not so advanced. An enlightened, tender, and vigorous-minded prince, was then a kind of phenomenon.

it as long as he lived. The duke on his death-bed ren-
sighed it to his daughter, and required the most so-
lemn vow, that she would wear it to the end of her
existence, or give it only to him whom she should
choose for a husband. Beatrice fell upon her knees,
and, all bathed in tears, vowed by all that was most
sacred, faithfully to execute the last wish of a dying
father. I alone was witness to this affecting scene, of
which it is impossible I should ever lose the remem-
brance." The reader will easily imagine what impres-
sion this explanation made upon the mind of Oliver.
He vainly endeavoured to show, that the duchess en-
tertained no sentiments respecting him, but what she
considered due to her defenders in general. The old
man, though he believed that the marriage, which
for political reasons was only deferred for a while, had
not yet taken place, yet remained fully convinced,
that Beatrice had promised him her hand, and that
Oliver would certainly be her husband. While they
were thus conversing, Oliver perceived a numerous
and brilliant company advancing to them: he soon
distinguished Isambard and Roger, and that this was
the countess of Carcassone and her escort. As they
drew nearer, Oliver, observing two women of equal
beauty at the head of the troop, was at first at some
loss to distinguish which was Axiana; remarking,
however, that one of them was dressed as an Ama-
zon, he imagined that war-like garb denoted the
countess; and he was not deceived in his conjecture.
After the first salutations were over, Oliver begged
Isambard to loiter a little behind the retinue, in or-
der to speak with him in private. When the com-
pany had advanced two hundred paces, Oliver, taking
his friend by the hand, and looking at him with eyes
running over with tears, "O my brother," said he,
" thou faithful companion of those terrible nights,
the horror of which thy generous friendship has so
often contributed to mitigate, know, that I am at
length

length delivered from that frightful apparition."—At these words the grateful tears of joy bathed the cheeks of Isambard. He pressed Oliver's hand, and was unable to make reply. After a pause of a few minutes, he began to ask a thousand questions upon this happy event, and the two friends agreed to pass the following night together ; for Isambard was anxious to enjoy the satisfaction of seeing his friend delivered from his terrors, and sleeping in peace. They now pushed forwards and rejoined the countess, who, during the rest of the road, appeared to be wholly taken up with the Knights of the Swan. This celebrated Amazon, who had displayed in various combats all the ability and valour of a great general, possessed likewise all the virtues and qualities which do honour to both sexes. The purity of her conduct, the sweetness of her disposition, and the modesty of her deportment, gave real value to her splendid actions. The lady who accompanied her, who was dressed in black, and kept her eyes upon the ground, remained silent ; but she was remarkable for her soft and majestic beauty, and the deep melancholy with which she was oppressed. The escort did not arrive at the castle before night. Axiana alighted from her horse at the first draw-bridge ; she took her companion by the hand, and gave the other arm to Isambard. In this manner she passed through two courts, and met Beatrice in the third. These two princesses, worthy of appreciating each other's merit, embraced with sincerest sentiments of esteem and admiration. Axiana presented her companion to the duchess without naming her, but as a person of the highest rank : the company then hastened to the palace. When the princesses were in the drawing-room, the ladies of the court of Beatrice, and the knights who attended them, entered likewise. Barmecide appeared among the last who came in. He advanced towards the princesses ; and at this moment the beautiful stranger
who

who accompanied Axiana cast her eyes upon him. She immediately started. "It is he! it is Bar-mecide!" exclaimed she with transport. On saying this, she flew to his arms. The spectators were all motionless with astonishment; the famous name of Bar-mecide was known all over the world; but every one, having deplored the tragical end of that illustrious victim of despotism, could not persuade themselves that Giaffar was that great man. The Knights of the Swan alone could comprehend the mystery of this affecting scene, and recognise the interesting Abassa.

CHAPTER XIX.

CONTINUATION OF THE STORY OF ABASSA.

L'amour pour le trouver me fournira des ailes.
Où fait-il sa retraite, en quels lieux dois-je aller?
Fut-il au bout du monde, on m'y verra voler.

L'Illusion de PIERRE CORNEILLE.

La mer, les vents, l'exil, ont-ils pu m'étonner?

Ariane de THOMAS CORNEILLE.

BARMECIDE, transported with delight, forgot the whole world, and all his sufferings, in the arms of his long-lost wife. The evidence of Axiana and the Knights of the Swan removing all doubts respecting his existence, every one took the greatest interest in this event. They assembled about the hero, and looked at him with as much curiosity as if they had never seen him before.—Few men are capable of discerning and acknowledging superior merit, unless it be first pointed out to them; but all, by an involuntary and natural impulse, are forward to pay their homâge

homage as soon as merit is once consecrated by fame. The three princesses, Barmecide, and the Knights of the Swan, repaired to Beatrice's closet, and there the happy Barmecide received the affectionate congratulations of his friends. After a quarter of an hour's conversation, the company retired, leaving the happy pair tête à tête ; and after supper they again met in the duchess's apartment, to hear the continuation of the history of Abassa, which she related in the following terms:

" While my wandering husband, under the guidance of the faithful Nasuf, was leaving the city stained with the blood of his unhappy brothers, I was groaning in the depth of a prison.—On the third day, one of my slaves obtained permission to visit me. This young person was strongly attached to me ; and so greatly was she affected on seeing my pallid looks, my dishevelled hair, and the fetters with which I was loaded, that she fainted in my arms. She was carried away ; and I had the additional sorrow to hear, that the unfortunate creature had fallen a victim to her tender attachment, and was no more.—Nasuf returned from Mecca ; the caliph gave him some orders relating to me ; and at length I saw the deliverer of Barmecide.—After having answered all my questions respecting my husband, he informed me, that the faithless slave, who had betrayed us, had been condemned to death by the caliph, and would be publicly executed on the following day. I demanded why ? ' Heaven by this death,' replied Nasuf, ' punishes with equity her vile treachery ; but the calif has passed an unjust judgment, since he has condemned her for having stolen your diamonds, after which vain search has been made in all your apartments, but which I had secured and carried to my own house, with your privity, the day I was ordered to take you to prison.' ' What,' cried I, ' Nasuf, can we suffer this woman to lose her life for a crime

she did not commit, and for an act of which we ourselves are the authors?' 'Consider,' replied Nasuf, 'that the truth cannot be discovered without bringing destruction upon my head,—and consider too, that this woman is a monster; that her treachery has caused the proscription of your husband, and shed the blood of the Barmecides; that it has occasioned your captivity, and all the evils we are deplored.' 'It is, however,' returned I, 'dreadful to think, that this woman should perish because I conceal the truth, which would clear her of the accusation made against her.' Full of this idea, I began to consider of some expedient, which might save this wretch without exposing Nasuf to harm, and at length suggested one which met with his approbation. In consequence of this plan, he took upon himself to inform the caliph I had something of the greatest importance to disclose to him, and that I demanded a moment's audience. After hesitating for several hours, Aaron at last consented to see me. At the close of the day I was taken from my prison, and conducted along by-ways to the palace. My hands being fettered with heavy shackles, I was entirely deprived of the use of them. Fatigued with this weight, and weakened by grief, I could scarcely walk. Two slaves supported my tottering steps; one of them carried a casket which I had given him in charge. I was led into the caliph's closet, and I ordered the slave to lay the casket on a table. The attendants withdrew, and I was left alone with my cruel oppressor. He was seated over-against me on the other side of the table. He commanded me in an imperious tone to lift up my veil. I made no other reply than shaking the chains which deprived me of the use of my hands. This seemed to make some impression upon him; he appeared disturbed, and kept silence for a moment. Then, observing that I staggered, and could hardly keep myself upon my legs, he arose, placed a chair behind me,

drew up my veil, and returned to his seat. I sat down ; he looked at me attentively, and I perceived he grew pale. ‘ Is it Abaffa,’ said he ; ‘ is it the sister of Aaron Raschid, who thus appears before me in this humiliating condition ? ’ ‘ Yes,’ replied I, ‘ it is she ; her free and independent soul has not changed, nor can tyranny subdue it. The wretched Abasia still lives, but she has no longer a brother, or any legal sovereign, the great Aaron exists no more ! ’ At these words he could not avoid starting ; solicitous however to conceal his emotion, he assumed a severe countenance, and raising his voice, ‘ In truth,’ said he, ‘ I am now only thy judge.’ ‘ Aye,’ replied I, ‘ but God will be thine.’—‘ Let us finish this conversation,’ interrupted he ; ‘ what hopes have brought you hither, what have you to communicate ? ’—‘ I have lost all, and have no longer any hope ; but fortune still affords me an opportunity of doing a generous act. I come here to fulfil that duty ; the perfidious woman, who betrayed me, has not stolen my jewels ; the faithful slave who visited me in prison had concealed them, in order to restore them to me ; I found means to hide them in my dungeon, I now bring them to you ;—they are in this casket.’ As I finished these words, the caliph, in great surprise and agitation, opened the casket, beheld all the diamonds, and appeared to fall into a mournful reverie. He arose from his seat, took a few turns in the chamber, and, approaching me, he undid the chains which shackled my hands. He performed this in great haste, and appeared as if he were fearful of giving way to compassion, and of being so near me. He refrained from looking at me, his hands trembled, he seemed oppressed, and the excessive paleness of his countenance sufficiently indicated the dreadful disorder of his mind. As soon as he had disengaged me from my fetters, he threw himself into his chair. ‘ Those jewels,’ said he, ‘ are yours ; take them back.

back. As for yourself, I shall have you conducted into a distant province, two hundred leagues from Bagdat ; there I command you to remain, and never to think of removing : moreover, you shall there be free, and my beneficence shall follow you in your retreat. Go into the next room, and wait there, till I have given my last orders relative to your departure.' At these words, I was preparing to leave the closet. ' Stop,' cried he, with a smothered voice, the alteration of which made me shudder ; ' Stop, sit down there a moment.' I obeyed ; he contemplated me in silence, for I had not had time to resume my veil. His fullen air, and the wildnes which was spread over his whole countenance, threw me into a kind of terror, which I was unable to withstand. I perceived, from the agitation of his mind, that he was meditating upon something extraordinary ; and, not being able to stand his stedfast and ill-boding looks, I cast my eyes upon the ground. In a few minutes, laying hold of the table which separated us, he pushed it away, and, drawing his chair near, he was so near me that his robe touched mine ; I shuddered, but remained motionless in my place. At length breaking silence, ' Thou hatest me,' said he, in a tone that chilled my blood, ' and thou art right to hate me—To thee I have been a tyrant, a barbarous persecutor.—Detest me, be implacable, but know that Aaron, whatever may be his crime and thy misfortune, can never become the object of contempt. Generosity still subsists at the bottom of this bewildered soul—I have had the madnes of tyrants, but do not possess their vile terrors.'—Upon this he drew his dagger from his girdle, and presenting it to me, ' I have had my revenge,' said he, ' now take thine !—here is my dagger, plunge it into the distracted breast of the murderer of the Barmecides.—Dost thou see their threatening ghosts arise about us ?—Dost thou see thy pale and bloody husband, calling upon

upon thy love and thy vengeance ? He demands at thy hands the death of his assassin ; strike, deliver me from an existence which I abhor.' At these words, I laid hold of the dagger ; I then threw it away from me without answering a word. I felt a tear starting from my eye, and, being desirous of hiding it from the cruel author of my ills, I covered my face with my veil. He arose, and remained, standing by me for an instant, keeping a gloomy silence ; afterwards, heaving a deep sigh, ' Adieu,' said he, ' adieu for ever.' Immediately he withdrew in a hasty manner, leaving me alone in the cabinet. There I remained more than an hour ; and I am able to give but an imperfect idea of what I suffered during this interval. It was in this same spot that I had seen Barmecide for the first time ; there it was I had received his first letter by stealth behind the caliph's chair ; it was there that between a beloved brother, and a husband I adored, I had passed the evening of each day for ten years together.—I recognised the chair on which Barmecide sat ; I was myself in the place I was used to fill by his side ; but there was I now proscribed, separated from him, perhaps for ever ; and in this place I wept at once the loss of my brother and my husband, together with the misfortune of my country. At length I was taken away ; I shed a torrent of tears, I left the closet, and fell into an agony of grief. On that very evening I set out for my exile ; my conductors were strangers to me ; I could not discover Nasuf among them. I flattered myself, however, that Aaron would inform him of the place of my retreat. He did not make any mention of it, and never uttered my name to him, so that Nasuf remained totally ignorant of my fate for more than a year ; for the caliph had taken care to make me change my name, and enjoined secrecy to all my conductors. I was treated with respect in the province where I was brought, but was strictly watched ; my slaves

slaves were devoted to the caliph, I dared not place confidence in any one, and I was unable to inform Nasuf of my situation. In the mean while he discovered, by dint of assiduous care, that I lived in a distant province, of which he at length learnt the name. Then he began to cause the rumour of it to be spread abroad, adding at the same time the false report, that I was secretly bringing up my son there. The caliph had no doubt of the death of this child, and besides he knew I was shut up in a seraglio, and guarded by slaves entirely at his devotion ; but, as Nasuf had foreseen, he imagined these rumours might in time be productive of disturbances, and give rise to dangerous impostures ; and he caused an account to be published of the death of my child at Mecca. The people seemed incredulous ; he spoke of their incredulity to Nasuf, who encouraged his fears, and advised him to have me brought back to the vicinity of Bagdat ; adding, that upon seeing my return, they, who believed my son to be living, would imagine he had been discovered and put to death by order of the caliph, and that, henceforward living under his own observation, I should no longer give rise to the propagation of such fabulous reports. Aaron approved of this advice, and commissioned Nasuf to go and fetch me. This generous friend, who had been long making preparations for our flight, had transmitted to Europe a great part of the treasure he acquired from the confiscation of the possessions of Barmecide, and the unbounded liberality of the caliph. He collected all the money he could carry with him, and being furnished with the orders of Aaron, he came in quest of me. I nearly died with emotion and joy at the sight of him. He showed his orders, and left all my slaves without exception ; I took the jewels which the caliph had restored me, and set off at midnight alone with Nasuf under the holy guard of faithful friendship. Nasuf informed me,

that

that the treacherous slave, whose life I imagined I had saved, had not escaped the chastisement which providence kept in store for her ; the jewels she had stolen from Nouraha had been found in her possession, and the caliph laid hold of that pretext to condemn her to death. As on this occasion I was admiring the decrees of eternal justice, Nasuf, who for many years back had been touched with the virtues and discourses of Barmecide, and had secretly embraced christianity, was desirous of inspiring me with his sentiments, and inducing me to embrace his belief ; but the prejudices of education, and the power of custom, still strongly attached me to my religion, and I declared to him, that I was determined to preserve it to the end of my existence.

“ Our journey was long, but fortunate. When we arrived in Europe, I blest heaven at finding myself at last in that part of the world where I had hopes of meeting Barmecide. One day, as we were pursuing our journey, we passed through a town, at the extremity of which we found a great concourse of people, which obliged us to stop. We soon heard religious psalmody ; the multitude divided itself, and left a passage in the middle of the street, along which marched in procession a numerous train of priests dressed in superb garments, and bearing a magnificent canopy and several splendid banners. Young children crowned with flowers carried baskets filled with roses, with which they strewed the ground. Surprised at this novel spectacle, I willingly yielded to the desire which Nasuf expressed to follow the procession, which at length stopped before an immense edifice of a prodigious height, and of antique structure. ‘ Ah,’ said Nasuf to me with emotion, ‘ at last I find myself at the gates of a temple dedicated to the true God ; O allow me to enter and return thanksgiving to the Eternal, for the safety of Barmecide and Abassa !’ On uttering these

wo. c’s,

words, he proceeded towards the temple, and I accompanied him. As I entered this sacred place I experienced a sensation of awful respect. In our own country I had only seen mosques of modern construction, the newness of which seemed to indicate that of our worship ; but here every thing bore testimony of the venerable antiquity of the christian religion. I advanced along the lofty aisles with a kind of sacred dread, and perceived at the farther end of the edifice an illuminated altar, decorated with garlands and festoons of flowers. I saw Nasuf fall upon his knees, and I was involuntarily led to imitate him. The chanting ceased, and deep silence prevailed in the church ; but in a few minutes my ears were struck with celestial music, which reached the inmost recesses of my soul ; for I recognised in an instant the melodious and swelling sounds of the ingenious instrument my husband had invented.—A dear and affecting remembrance produced an inconceivable revolution in my ideas : it was for the honour of his God that Barmecide had invented this wonderful machine, which the Europeans had consecrated to the same purpose ; its enchanting harmony, while it revived the recollection of the happiest days of my life, excited in my mind a religious respect for the worship of the christians. My heart sought the God of Barmecide, I invoked his name, I prayed for the restoration of my husband and my child, and I left the church in consolation, peace, and hope.

" We were now in the dominions of the countess of Carcassone ; I met that august princess by chance ; the generous concern she showed for me inspired so much confidence, that I communicated my story to her. I informed her it was my intention to repair to the court of the count of Bavaria, where I hoped to meet Barmecide. Axiana told me she was instantly marching to the duchy of Cleves to join the list of

of the defenders of Beatrice, who was besieged by Gerold. Certain of being able to obtain information concerning Barmecide, I gratefully accepted the offers of Axiana, and accompanied her on her journey."

The conclusion of Abaffa's recital made Barmecide sigh; he perceived that Nasaf had still suffered her to imagine her son was alive, and that he had been sent into Europe; he was afflicted at the idea that it was impossible she should much longer indulge so dear an expectation; and which she could not lose without feeling the most poignant anguish.

CHAPTER XX.

AN IMPORTANT DISCOVERY.

La prudence est surtout nécessaire aux méchans.

VOLTAIRE.

BARMECIDE and his wife did not leave the court of Beatrice before the next day. Theobald offered them his mansion, and it was agreed upon that Abaffa should reside there till the end of the war. Barmecide at first was only delighted at the recovery of Abaffa; but soon began to reflect with secret delight, that he was going to enjoy his reputation and glory, and appear at the camp under the great name of Barmecide. He likewise felt the most eager impatience to embrace the faithful Nasuf, who being on his way with the suite of the princesses, was not to arrive before the expiration of two days.

An hour after Barmecide's departure, Isambard, Oger and Angilbert, walking together in the portico

of the palace, Angilbert asked the Danish knight, whether it were true that Armoflede was ill. "Yes," replied Oger, "but not dangerously so." "Were you not going to visit her this evening?" returned Angilbert, "and did not she let you know she could not receive you, because, being in great want of rest, she was going to bed at six o'clock?" "And how do you know all this?" interrupted Oger. "I know many more things," said Angilbert, "thanks to the incorrigible imprudence of Armoflede; and if you will give me your word not to be violent, and above all, not to avenge yourself, I will inform you of all; for it is time to open your eyes respecting a person so little worthy the attachment of a knight like you." At these words, Oger, quite amazed and much affected, made the promise required by Angilbert; and the latter, resuming his discourse, "Know then," said he, "that Felix, one of my pages, being intimately acquainted with your's, has frequently accompanied him as far as Armoflede's house. It was his custom to wait at a neighbouring cottage for Sylvan, who entered the house, and afterwards returned to join Felix. At the beginning of these visits Sylvan used to say he carried messages from you; but soon the indiscretion natural to his age, and his extreme simplicity, allowing him no longer to conceal the truth, Felix, more dexterous and older than he, quickly discovered, that he was in love with Armoflede; and at last Sylvan himself confessed, that he believed himself loved again, but that Armoflede set a fantastical value upon her favours, and that he could not determine upon doing what she required of him. Felix questioned him in vain on this subject. Sylvan still refused to give a better explanation. Some expressions, however, which fell from him, gave Felix strange suspicions, and then it was that he communicated the affair to me. I ordered him to endeavour to introduce himself

self into Armosfede's house, with a view of unravelling this mystery. He found means of gaining over a young maid-servant belonging to the house; and one day, when Armosfede was gone out with her two other domestics, the young girl let in Felix, who, in examining the mansion, observed a dark closet filled with wood, of which the maid had the key. This closet was contiguous to the chamber, the usual scene of the conferences which passed in the house; it was separated from it by a thin wainscot, and two men might hide themselves in it, and hear every thing that was said. Beside this closet is a garret, the window of which opens towards the country from the front of the house. In consequence of this, and more information, Felix, by my directions, prevailed on the young servant to let him in this night in the following manner. At ten o'clock she is to hang out a ladder of ropes which Felix has furnished her with, and to leave her chamber door open, that he may find her on his arrival, her room being at the end of a passage beside this garret. I propose to you then," continued Angilbert, "to go yourself this evening to Armosfede's house, to get in through the garret, and to conceal yourself in the dark closet, the key of which Felix has procured. There you will hear some horrid things, you will know to what degree the simplicity of a credulous and warm-hearted youth is imposed upon, and tomorrow you will be restored to reason, and perfectly cured of a passion, the folly of which has been long lamented by your friends."

Oger, quite confounded, made no reply; but Isambard accepted the proposal of Angilbert for him, adding, that he himself would accompany him in this nocturnal excursion. At nine Isambard and the Danish knight set out in a private manner. The night was dark, and the unhappy Oger, wrapped up in melancholy reflections, kept silence during all the way.

way. He could no longer deceive himself as to Armosfede's profligate conduct, but he still considered her to be utterly incapable of the horrid things which had been suggested, and of which he had not thought fit to ask any explanation. He was irritated against Angilbert, and even against Isambard, because he had seen him question the former, and shudder with indignation. Isambard endeavoured in vain to prepare him for what he was going to hear. "For heaven's sake!" interrupted Oger, with a degree of peevishness, "spare yourself the trouble of repeating the conversation of Angilbert." "It is necessary, however," returned Isambard, "that in order to be able to comprehend what you are going to hear, you should first know, that the infamous Marcelina, to whom the house formerly belonged, has frequent conferences with Armosfede, and that they are to be together this night." These few words made Oger start; not that he could indulge the horrible suspicion that his friends wanted to give him respecting Armosfede; but he felt the wildest sensations of fury on perceiving, that Isambard had not the least doubt of the secret intelligence of that lady with a woman, who was universally considered as a vender of poisonous drugs. He was on the point of falling into the most violent fit of rage, nevertheless he was still able to contain himself; but from this instant he totally ceased from making any reply. Being arrived near the house, the knights fastened their steeds to a tree five hundred paces from the mansion. They then repaired to the open window, found the ladder of ropes, and mounted without any obstacle. They had taken off their shoes, in order to make no noise; they gently opened the door of the closet, and entered together, for Felix had had the precaution to remove several pieces of wood from it. Every thing seemed quiet in the house;

house ; they remained more than half an hour without hearing the least stir.

Oger now began to triumph, when the door of the chamber was heard to open, and a person to enter. The person sat down without speaking a word, and this silence lasted near an hour. At last the door opened a second time ; Oger distinguished Armo-flede's voice ; he was affected, and much agitated. —But let the reader imagine, if it be possible, the horrour with which he was seized on listening to the detestable conversation which follows, of which Oger did not lose a single word. Armo-flede, on entering the room, cautiously shut the door, and, addressing herself to the person who was waiting for her, “ I am come very late,” said she, “ but I could not get rid of that boy ; I never found him so earnest, so enamoured, and so determined. He persists in staying here to-night. I am going to encourage his love and his hopes, and I flatter myself, that to-morrow he will distribute our potions ! ” “ What,” replied the voice of an old woman (for it was Marcelina herself), “ you have promised the boy your last favours, and you are not yet obeyed ? ” “ I know not what instinct warms him, in spite of his credulity, of the danger of the commission ; he shows a repugnance, if not invincible, at least extreme ; but I shall triumph over it ; I am sure of success. As I am resolved he shall go to work to-morrow, let us for the last time enter into a little explanation relative to this affair. I confess I still fear the effect of these potions will either be too prompt or too weak.” —“ Had you followed my advice, you would have been satisfied on that head two months ago. Why did not you make trial upon Sufan or this little page ? ” —“ Sufan is a good servant, and I stand in need of a girl of her simplicity ; she has neither eyes nor ears : and as to Sylvan, his assistance is absolutely necessary to the very thing itself.” —“ Well, but on the like conditions

tions you would have found another!"—"By no means : I must have Oger's page. Besides, he is so handsome ! and I owe him, and owe myself too, the recompence he is hoping for. My word is sacred. Afterwards we shall see."—"I understand you. But to return to the drugs, I never prepared better in my life. That which is composed for a woman is much less violent than that designed for Oger."—"Have not you lowered it too much?"—"No ; it will, as I have already told you, cause an extreme languor from the very day on which it is swallowed ; afterward the person will insensibly fall into a decline, and in a short time lose all her beauty."—"Are you certain of all this?"—"A single dose would be sufficient ; judge then of the effect of the whole phial."—"Well—" "After having suffered seven or eight months—" "I have told you I do not want to kill them."—"No, nor I neither. I prepare philters and not poisons."—"That is what I imagined ; I am only desirous that this philter, as you have promised me, should deprive them of those passions which counteract mine."—"Certainly, and this cannot be effected without a physical revolution ; make yourself easy, and be assured, they shall be *rid* of all human passions in less than a year."—"If thou dost not betray me, thou mayest depend upon the sum which I have promised thee."—"Betray you ! how could I ? In making information against you to the princess, I should have no proofs to give her ; besides, if I had, I know her ; I should ruin you, and gain nothing myself. Beatrice never rewards informers ; she would hear me, and send me away without recompense. But, independent of all these reasons, surely you ought to place due confidence in me. What, after the most singular hazard, which has brought us together in a country so far from our wretched native land, can you mistrust her who took care of your childhood ?"—Thou oughtest indeed

deed to love me, for I have profited by the lessons and examples thou hast afforded me. Yet our first meeting during my journey into Lombardy did not turn out very fortunate for me. The manner in which you gave me up to prince Adalgise—" "Recollect that he then flattered himself he should recover his throne."—" I allow I am indebted to thee for having freed me from all those prejudices to which fools are slaves ; but am I the happier for this ? Every moment seems to increase the empire of my passions ; the less I resist them, the more they agitate and consume me ; I desire with fury, and do not enjoy with transport."—" What, already ! and so young !"—" My heart has grown old, and my senses are palled ; canst thou believe it ? I have already lost the sweetest of all illusions ; love itself, in my eyes, is no more than a chimera."—" How ?" and that Isambard, of whom you have spoken so much ?" " He—I hate him.—He governs my imagination, it is true ; I see no one so amiable and bewitching as he ; I would bestow the half of my existence to be adored by him for a few hours only.—A single night,—I wish to inflame him, to make him happy, to enjoy his raptures, to partake them, and then to avenge myself."—" Happiness would make you forget vengeance."—" Forget vengeance ! I should meditate it even in his arms ! No, believe me, it is not anger which makes me speak. I am no longer deceived as to my own feelings, I no longer take emotions for sentiments ; I hate him, I tell you."—" But if he should conceive a strong passion for you !"—" Would to heaven he did ! he would then cease to please me ; nothing is so insipid as a strong passion ; 'tis the romantic love I know he has for another, which renders him so desirable in my eyes. I wish to lead him astray, to seduce, and not to fix him."—" What a head you have !"—" It is heated, it is a volcano ! —But my soul is withered away—hated

tered and misanthropy tarnish and consume it—gloomy reflections often assail me—What becomes of us, Marcelina, when we have lost our youth and beauty? For instance, in your own case, how can you dispense with lovers?"—"I do not dispense with them, every thing is to be had for money."—"How, what even voluptuousness?"—"Alas, when we have indulged ourselves in excess we must take an early leave of our delights! Love, at my time of life, is only a bitter remembrance, an impotent fury; pleasure is worn out; custom alone still preserves a want without desire, and which irritates itself without hope."—"What a frightful picture! But has virtue any advantage?"—"Yes, I have often thought, that after having given up ourselves to the unbounded gratification of our passions, if it were possible to recover lost reputation, and return to virtue, it would be making an excellent bargain."—"It is late, get away, and take care not to be seen by Sylvan."—"You will pass the night together; mind and do not pay him before hand."—"Never fear; I was never under less temptation. I know not what is the matter with me this evening, I feel myself ill."—"Indeed you are much altered."—"Come, delay no longer, but leave me." At these words the execrable Marcelina went away, and every thing again seemed quiet. The knights, quite chilled with horrour, remained motionless, holding each other by the hand. In a few minutes Armoflede arose from her seat, called a servant, to whom she gave orders to tell Sylvan to come to her; and in a moment after, the little page, entering the room in a noisy manner, exclaimed: "At length you call me, but why did you not return below? You never before received me in this closet."—"My dear Sylvan," replied Armoflede, "I am so weak and overcome this evening, that I had not resolution to go down stairs."—"You are weak? so much the better, it is so I would have

have you be:"—" And ,for my part, I would have thee be more tender and submissive."—" More tender ! ah ! do you imagine that to be possible ? No, no, you are well aware I love you to madness."—" Better than thou lovedst Chloe ?"—" Ah ! Chloe is handsome 'tis true, but you are a thousand times more charming, more tender ; and then Chloe has not such pretty hands, so soft, so white, so delicate—I adore those hands—ah, why do you withdraw them ?"—" Thou shalt kiss them no more, till thou hast executed my orders."—" Is it possible ?"—" Yes, I am determined upon it."—" These cursed philters !"—" But, why hast thou such repugnance to administer them ? Canst thou doubt of their efficacy ?"—" No, surely, since you have made trial upon myself. I well know that I once loved Chloe, that now I no longer love her, but that you I adore."—" And yet, as I had told thee, the effect was not so powerful, as it would have been hadst thou not been forewarned of it. But I conducted myself with all the frankness of love ; I confessed my passion to thee ; I offered to make thee forget Chloe ; I explained to thee the effect of this beneficent drug."—" Oh I shall never forget it. It was one night !—Scarce had I swallowed the liquor, when I instantly felt what you had foretold ; that emotion, that disquietude, that devouring flame—that fluttering at the heart !—I looked at you with other eyes—I immediately lost all my bashfulness —do you remember it ?"—" Ah, but too well."—" Had you made me drink a few drops more, it is certain I should entirely have lost my senses."—" When we know how to prepare a love-potion, we do not mistake respecting the dose (32). After such positive and striking experience, why then dost hesitate to give these philters to thy master and to Beatrice ?"—Are you very sure they will reciprocally love each other ?"—" I have explained that to thee so often!"—" I believe, but do not rightly

rightly comprehend it?"—" If thou believest it, what more is necessary? Consider, Sylvan, that in obeying me, thou wilt make the fortune of thy master, procure the happiness of Beatrice and our own. Thou wilt no longer have a rival, and I can give myself up to thee without constraint, and without any dread of an incensed lover."—" But still, it is deceiving my master, it is abusing the employment I have under him—And poor Isambard too, who, 'tis said, adores the princess, and is beloved by her again; how this will afflict him! He will perhaps fight with my master. What will then become of me, who am the cause of all this disorder?"—" Well then, give up all thoughts of me, for I declare I shall never have the resolution to dismiss Oger, and certainly thou shalt not be my lover as long as Oger remains constant to me."—" And yet you love me?"—" To distraction."—" I will not leave you before day-light. Oh how fortunate this night may prove!"—" Ah! thou hast had Oger's phial in thy pocket for two days past; if thou hadst obeyed me, with what transport, with what delicious intoxication would I now press thee to my bosom."—" To thy bosom, to that alabaster bosom!"—" Ungrateful boy, if thou lovedst me! if the flame which consumes me ran through thy veins!"—" Hear me—if, notwithstanding all I have said, I should prove that your orders are executed!"—" How?"—" Yes, I have administered the beverage—This very noon at dinner, Oger received it from my hand." At these terrible words Isambard shuddered; but Oger, willing to hear the end of this interview, put his hand upon his friend's mouth, and the infamous Armo-flede continued to speak. "Is it really true," said she, "and why have you concealed it from me?"—" I was desirous of owing my happiness solely to the excess of thy love. Here, look at this phial."—" Thou hast not given a sufficient dose, thou shouldst

shouldest have administered the half of it ; for I told thee it ought to be taken in two days."—"I was in haste, I was confused ; but I thought I had given enough to inflame him."—"Did he grow pale ? was he in a languishing condition the rest of the day ? Thou knowest these symptoms of desire and love, should manifest themselves until the very moment of happiness. This thou experiencest thyself, thou hast no longer thy ruddy looks."—"Yes, I burn, I languish, but thou art going to cure me ; that thou must now do."—"Stop—I must still have more satisfactory proof—Besides, Sylvan, I vow I have a fever to-night, I am in pain, in violent pain, and particularly within this last hour."—"Come, come, 'tis only the fever of love."—"Sylvan, I protest, I am very ill."—"Well, I can no longer lie and deceive you. Know then the nature of thy illness ; 'tis what I myself endure. O adorable woman, pardon thy lover—That philter prepared by those divine hands, and which communicates to the senses an active and consuming flame, Oger has not taken ; love has made a happier use of it ; this evening, at supper-time, I had the dexterity to administer it to thee." At these words Armoſlede ſunk back with terrour into her chair, and loſing all refection, ſhe cried out with a languid voice, "O heavens ! I am poifoned !"—Sylvan ſhuddered. "What do I hear ?" cried he. "What ! was this beveraſe poiſon ?"—The detestable Armoſlede could make no reply, ſhe had fallen into a ſwoon. Sylvan, diſmayed, and ſeized with horrore and affright, called loudly to the ſervants. At this instant he heard ſome hafthy foot-ſteps ; the door opened, and what were his terrores on perceiving Isambard and the Danish knight ! The unfortunate page, burſting into tears, ran and threw himſelf at his master's feet. Oger lifted him up, took him in his arms, and preſſing him to his boſom, "My dear youth," cried he,

"when

"when I reflect on the good disposition you have just been showing, I am confident, that my error and your own will serve to convince us of the danger of the passions, and of the value of good morals and virtue. Ah, never forget this terrible lesson!"—Oger, as he thus spoke, could not refrain from tears; but they were soon dried up on observing the infamous Armoflede recovering from her fit, and opening her eyes. On perceiving the knights, it was neither in her power to shun their presence nor to show any marks of surprise. Petrified with astonishment and horrour, she continued in a frightful state of inaction, eyeing them with haggard and stupid looks. Oger approaching her, "For three hours past," said he, "concealed behind that wainscot, I heard every thing that has been said. At length, acknowledge a providence, which sooner or latter punishes the guilty." Upon this, taking the afflicted Sylvan by the hand, and leaning upon Isambard's arm, Oger hastily left the chamber. At the door of the house Sylvan, accosting Oger with a supplicating air, "O my dear master," said he, "I detest her, 'tis true, but she is poisoned, and by my hands—This is a dreadful circumstance; must we leave her without assistance?"—"I am totally ignorant," answered Oger, "what kind of antidote is necessary for her, and our presence will but aggravate the horrors of her condition. But we will send one of the princess's physicians to her." This, indeed, was his first care on his arrival at the palace; he likewise called up Theobald to give him an account of the crimes of Marcelina and Armoflede, soliciting the pardon of the latter. Marcelina was taken into custody, and upon the depositions of the two knights, the little page, and Felix, that abominable woman was shut up for the rest of her days. The physician pronounced Armoflede's life to be out of danger, but declared it was not in the power of art to restore her

to health, and that she would be obliged to keep her bed for several weeks. Her house was searched, and four phials were found containing a poison similar to that she had put into the hands of the credulous Sylvan. Beatrice sent her an assurance of pardon, adding, that she permitted her to remain three months longer in the house she lived in, but at the expiration of that time, she should be for ever banished from the duchy of Cleves.

CHAPTER XXI.

FRIENDS OF THE NINTH CENTURY.

For blessings ever wait on virtuous deeds,
And though a late, a sure reward succeeds.

Mourning Bride. CONGREVE.

THE war, which had now been carried on for two months, still continued inactive and unproductive of bloody combats ; discord created divisions among the chiefs of the allied powers ; some were desirous of peace, others were anxious for the prolongation of hostilities, and several of them already expressed their intentions of withdrawing themselves from this imprudent and unjust *coalition*. The troops fought with regret, and the heroic courage of their adversaries spread such terrore through the whole army, that the generals, fearful of being ill supported, did not venture upon any thing decisive. Barmecide, in council, forcibly recalled to the memory of the princes every thing he had foretold. The events had justified his former speech against the war ; his genius and eloquence met with great admiration, but passion got the

the better of reason and sound policy. In the age in which we now live, such blindness will certainly appear inconceivable to those wise heads which give counsel to sovereigns, and rule the flourishing empires of Europe ; but it must be recollect ed we are speaking of the ninth century. Without this consideration, such measures would surely appear egregiously absurd, and utterly incredible.

The besiegers made their attacks with timidity, and, being always repulsed with vigour, nothing memorable took place during the rest of the winter, except a few single combats between the chiefs of the two parties, who reciprocally challenged each other. The youthful Roger, acquainted that Ribold was in the army of the princes, was eager to combat the persecutor of Azoline. The conflict was long and terrible ; he displayed all the heroic valour, and all the generosity of chivalry. He wounded and overthrew his adversary, and, being master both of his life and liberty, "I leave thee," said he, "thy execrable existence, in order to furnish me with an opportunity of vanquishing thee again ; I disdain to take so vile a prisoner ; by the laws of war thy spoils belong to me, but they cannot become a trophy of glory, and will fully the hand that is pure." On saying this, he left him on the field of battle, and returned to the castle. The courageous Axiana was witness of this action, and, having learnt from Isambard the story of Roger, she applauded his generosity. This suffrage was of inestimable value in the estimation of Roger ; for Axiana had made a deep impression upon his heart, and this new passion served to weaken daily the tender remembrance of Azoline. But Roger remarked with concern, that the Knights of the Swan alone seemed to attract the notice and excite the attention of the counts. Roger was persuaded, that one of these knights had the good fortune to please the fair Axiana ; he was most apprehensive

hensive of Oliver, for his mind was at ease respecting Isambard, imagining him to be in love with Beatrice, and that, according to the general opinion, he was again beloved. In one of the most vigorous assaults, which the besieged repulsed with their accustomed valour, the countess displayed all the intrepidity of the bravest and most daring warrior. Rotbold, who was now cured of his wounds, provoked this heroine to single combat; she determined to accept the challenge in spite of the intreaty of all the knights, and the painful disquietude of Roger. The combat lasted near an hour with equal advantage to both sides, when a violent storm accompanied with hail suddenly arising, afforded the spectators of either party a pretext for separating the warriors. The Knights of the Swan, followed by the most zealous defenders of the duchess, made several sallies in hopes of provoking a general battle; but the enemy still continued in their entrenchments; and in all these expeditions the party of Beatrice could only obtain the glory of displaying a superior degree of courage, and that of making a few prisoners.

In the mean time, Oliver, who for the last two months had been delivered from his dreadful obsession, and enjoyed the refreshment of sleep, insensibly recovered health, and resumed all the glowing bloom of youth. This kind of physical revolution produced likewise a revolution in his ideas. His ardent imagination, relieved from a domineering and terrible train of reflection, now turned to objects of an engaging and fascinating nature. Celanira still existed at the bottom of his heart; but, knowing that she had at length received the immortal palm of virtue, she no longer presented herself to his mind under the distressing form of an innocent victim, or the bewitching shape of one who passionately loved him. He could no longer view her but through the medium

medium of a religious veil, and under an angelic and mysterious form. A contemplation of so pure a nature left him a vague though sublime remembrance, which produced upon his soul an impression more soft than profound, and which, far from maintaining the constancy of unfortunate love, daily weakened its regrets.

Being acquainted with the interesting story of the duchess's pearl necklace, Oliver from that moment set an inestimable value upon this tender pledge of fier sentiments. Having taken it from the houssings of his horse, he had converted it into a bracelet, which he wore upon his left arm, and which was concealed under his clothes. It was the custom of the times to wear in this manner the most valued gift of a mistress, and the custom was then consecrated only to love *. These pearls, fastened round the arm of Oliver, had the effect of a talisman upon him, or rather they became a real one ; for it was doubtless the magic power of love which gave the first idea of a supernatural enchantment. Oliver was very sensible of the violent passion he felt, and did not even endeavour to check it ; but he was not the less faithful to honour and friendship. He reflected maturely upon his situation, scrupulously examined the duties which were imposed upon him, and vowed to fulfil them all. He was well aware, that, independently of his friendship for Isambard, and of the gratitude which he owed him, a second marriage would still be criminal. He considered, that all the felicity of a new union would be every moment impoisoned by this frightful thought : *The happiness I now enjoy, I owe to the death of Celanira, who was assassinated by my hand !—Without that horrible crime, Beatrice would never have been my wife.*—This reflection made him quake, and was ever present to

* See Memoirs of Chivalry, by Mr. de St. Palaye.

his mind. "No, no," said he to himself, "were I not to find a rival in the dearest of friends and brothers, yet Beatrice could never be mine; it is my duty to hide from her for ever the sentiments she inspires, or at least to persuade her that they arise only from the remembrance she revives; I ought to use all the ascendancy I have over her in favour of Isambard; but I may be allowed to adore her in secret, and in this manner I may do so without remorse. O Celanira, it is thou alone whom I love in her!—What other form but thine could have been able still to fix my attention!—What other soul, than thy angelic one, could have assumed such empire over mine!—I adore her, because I adore thee!—Had thy remembrance been lost, would she have been able to make this deep, this indelible impression upon my heart? Had my dreadful sufferings, had my dark despair destroyed the ardent passion I cherished for thee, I should have beheld Beatrice with indifference. But can I again find thee, without transport?"—Thus did Oliver justify a passion which in fact was so blended with the remembrance of Celanira that he could not consider it as a new affection. The felicity of being still under the empire of love; feeling his soul again alive to the delicious impressions of tenderness; this new and powerful interest which revived his attachment to life, enabled him to consider the painful sacrifices he had imposed upon himself, if not without some bitterness, at least without despair; sacrifices to which his mind had been accustomed since the death of Celanira, by considering so often, that there was but one real evil in life, that of leaving the object of his affections. In fine, he repeatedly concluded, that the happiness of Beatrice and Isambard sufficed to render him happy; he remarked, however, the growing inclination of Axiana for his friend with secret satisfaction, which he was unwilling to avow to himself; but at the bottom of

his heart he conceived the hope that Isambard in time might return the countess's passion, and on this consideration he allowed himself to wish that Beatrice might still preserve her liberty. Thus did he let no opportunity of praising Axiana escape him; and especially when Isambard was within his hearing.

He testified such admiration of that princess, that many thought he was himself in love with her; but the heart of Beatrice did not misunderstand all this; and she had likewise discovered the sentiments of Axiana. She determined to have an interview with Isambard on this subject; and one evening she invited him to an interview in her closet. This unexpected rendezvous gave more uneasiness than joy to the Knight of the Swan. For some time past he had observed the duchess was much changed with regard to him; and, although he showed no preference to another, he observed an absence of mind and melancholy about her, which struck him exceedingly. Often had he refused to give admittance to the distressing suspicions, which afforded him a glimpse of the truth; and he approached the duchess with a dolorous presentiment, which but too well prepared his mind for the confidence she was going to repose in him. He found her alone; at first she seemed much embarrassed; after a short time, appearing to take courage, she informed him she was going to open her heart to him without any disguise. She added, that she was sensible how extraordinary this step must appear; that she had with great difficulty prevailed upon herself to take it, but that she hoped the most perfect esteem and the sincerest friendship would plead in her excuse. After this introduction, she declared her love for Oliver, and related every thing that had passed between them. She dwelt particularly upon the refusal which Oliver had made of her hand; and, above all, upon his endeavours to recommend his friend to her. "He did every thing,"

thing," continued she, "to make me decide in your favour; every thing, even to the acknowledgment of his misfortune and his crime.—And knowing his deplorable destiny, I was sensible, with him, that fidelity to the memory of Celanira was, in fact, the most sacred of duties. I do not pretend to his love; I shall never be any thing more than a sister to him; but I cannot fix him near me but by giving him the title of husband. When in the course of time he shall know that this virtuous union secures the happiness of my life; when he shall be well convinced, that his presence and his friendship suffice for my felicity; when in Beatrice he shall cease to see the rival of Celanira, his vows, I am persuaded, will accord with mine, if the sentiments he knows you entertain for me do not afford an invincible obstacle."

"O heavens!" cried Isambard mournfully, "shall I be an obstacle to the happiness of Beatrice and Oliver?"—"Ah, generous Isambard," returned the duchess, "it depends but on you to make us all happy."—"I have myself now renounced happiness for ever!—But what can I do to contribute to yours? Speak, madam, and at least do not doubt of my obedience."—"Axiana passionately loves you; I am well convinced of it; the beauty, the virtue, the heroic qualities, of this illustrious princess, the glory with which she is surrounded, render her worthy of captivating a hero like yourself. Besides, she is daughter to one of the most illustrious successors of the great Pelagius, and widow to a prince who bore the title of king."—"Yes, madam," interrupted Isambard, "I am aware how great a distance her birth and rank place between herself and me; I can coolly survey the interval which separates us, and I know the whole extent of it. But allow me to tell you, that being ready to immolate myself for your sake, I am desirous at least that my sacrifice should not be attributed to ambition. I would refuse a

throne were it offered me ; and yet you may dispose of my liberty : but there is a surer and an easier expedient at hand. You wish to give me a wife ; I consent to take one ; but choose her from among the ladies who are about your person. Point her out, madam ; and, if she will accept my hand, I will instantly lead her to the altar ; and I swear to make her happy, and to conceal for ever from her the situation of my heart." At these words, Beatrice, much affected, lifted her eyes, bathed in tears, to Isambard. " What are you proposing to me ?" said she, " Can you imagine me capable of such an abuse of that matchless generosity ?"—" How, madam," returned Isambard, " shall I not be certain, that the wife I should receive from your hands will be worthy of my esteem ; and can I henceforth indulge happier hopes ?—I would spare you the embarrassment of directing my choice, were I myself capable of making a reasonable one ; but I have no intimacy here but with three persons whose hearts are engaged ; with Delia, Amalberga, and Sylvia. With the others I am scarcely acquainted ; you must therefore guide my choice." The simplicity with which Isambard explained himself added so great a value to his unbounded devotedness, that the duchess was unable to express the sense of her admiration and gratitude. She contemplated him in silence, and her tears gently trickled down her cheek. " Cease," cried he, " to distress yourself at my condition. It is true, the passion you reject will end only with my life ; but Oliver is as dear to me as my love itself ; that friendship, which has so long been the only passion of my heart, can never be weakened by any other attachment. Oliver, though my rival, is still the most affectionate, the most generous, and the noblest of men. Accustomed so many years to pride myself in bearing the name of his brother in arms, in admiring his exploits and his glory, interesting myself in his successes

successes or his pains, his happiness may be at variance with my inclinations and hopes, but he cannot destroy mine, since in him I shall ever find consolation. The excess of his sorrows has so closely cemented our union, that had he never known Beatrice, and she had offered me her hand on condition of my separating myself from him, I should have made the most heroic sacrifice to friendship, and the most trying that friendship could ever experience. Unfortunate Oliver ! whose bitter tears I have so often wiped away. Ah, may he at length lose the remembrance of his dreadful sufferings ! You alone, madam, can make him adequate compensation.—O how little will it cost me to forget myself, if I see you happy in each other.”—“ Ah,” cried Beatrice, “ Oliver surely ought to prefer such a friend to all other considerations ; and it will be out of my power to console him for the sacrifices which you would make for his sake.”—Isambard was going to reply ; but at this instant a page entered the closet to inform the duchess, that a courier had just announced the arrival of count Thederic, and the troops sent by Charlemagne. Beatrice requested Isambard to go immediately in quest of Oliver and the other French knights, in order to accompany them to meet the Imperial general.

C H A P T E R XXII.

A CONFLAGRATION.

Le moment du peril est celui de l'amour.

By BELLOC.

AT the instant in which the French knights assembled by Isambard were setting off to meet count Thederic,

Thederic, the sound of the horn announced his arrival. They hastened to the grand court of the palace, and there they met Thederic, who testified the greatest delight on seeing his brave countrymen. As they were entering the drawing-room, one of the pages of Thederic, breaking through the crowd with great eagerness, threw himself into the arms of Oliver, who, with pleasure and surprise, recognised Mirva, the adoptive child of Diaulas and Ordalia, whom he had delivered from the tyranny of the ferocious Rotbold. Thederic informed Oliver, that Ordalia and Diaulas, having safely arrived at the court of Charlemagne, had been received with transport by Witikind; that, after having embraced christianity, they conceived it their duty to renew, in a public manner, the sacred vows of marriage and the adoption of Mirva; that the latter, on seeing Thederic preparing to march to the succour of the duchess of Cleves, had shewn so strong a desire to accompany him in the expedition, and there to make his first essay in arms, that his adoptive parents, yielding to his instances, had prevailed upon themselves to part with him, and trust him to the care of Thederic *. After this explanation, Thederic delivered to Oliver a letter from Witikind. Oliver retired to his chamber to peruse it; and in this letter

* It was a common practice in these times to send children of that age into the army, or to the besieging of a place. This example has since often been renewed; and even in our own times. The youngest of my unfortunate pupils (Mr. de Beaujolois) has made his first campaign in the present war. He has been in several bloody campaigns; and displayed all the tranquillity and noble courage, which, among so many other virtues, so eminently distinguish his brothers; and he was then but in his eleventh year.—What children, what young people of their age, have shown more courage, activity, and zeal (and, I may venture to say, talents); more disinterestedness and love of their country?—And what has been their recompense?—The reader will pardon a reflection, which is certainly out of its place here; but alas! how many things revive the regret which arises from so natural and keen a sorrow!

he found the most powerful consolations. Witikind expressed all the gratitude which he felt towards the deliverer of his son ; and he added, that this event alone could soften his misfortunes, and still attach him to life. After having read the letter, which he wet with his tears, Oliver returned to the drawing-room. He there found every one taken up with young Mirva. The duchess, being informed of his story, had requested Thederic to give up this charming child to her care ; and it had been just arranged, that he should act as one of the duchess's pages during the rest of the siege. Mirva, at the knee of Beatrice, amused her by a sprightliness and engaging simplicity of manners, which she had never observed in any other child. Educated far from courts, and totally unacquainted with etiquette, he had no idea of the inequality of rank ; he was capable, however, of reserve, for he respected age ; but he knew not what timidity was. Among all about him, Theobald was the only person with whom he was not familiar. The good old man wanted to embrace him ; and Mirva kissed his hand with the expression of the deepest veneration. The youth and beauty of Beatrice had not inspired the same sentiment ; feelingly touched at her caresses, he gave way, without constraint, to his sensibility. Oliver could not observe without secret gratitude the attentions which Beatrice showed to Mirva ; he was conscious of the part he himself shared in that tender concern. Often did Beatrice, as she heard or looked at the child, endeavour to disguise by a smile, the emotion he had inspired. She would appear to be playing and jesting with him, yet would her eyes overflow with tears. Oliver read her heart ; he perceived she was fond of dwelling upon an object which reminded her of the generous action of the deliverer of Diaulas.

When supper was ended, Oliver, instead of retiring to rest, walked into the garden. It was now the early

early part of the month of May; the beauty of the night and the clearness of the moonshine awoke a thousand tender and painful ideas in his mind. He wandered a long time among the terraces which surround the castle, and at length sat himself down on a bench facing the palace, and just opposite the apartment of the duchess. There looking at Beatrice's chamber windows, "O transient and brilliant days of happiness," cried he, "for me you will be renewed no more! Never shall I again taste the dear delight of those interviews, which mutual confidence and love rendered inexhaustible and ever new. Henceforward shall my life waste away without the engaging incident of the hour of assignation! Bereaved of hope, and condemned to silence, my imagination shall no more indulge the pleasing dreams of delicious expectation, or my lips again pronounce the soft vow of loving for ever. Such is my destiny, and nothing can alter it. Yet I have not lost all; I admire with enthusiasm, I love to idolatry, there still exists a soul whose sentiments are responsive to mine. Alas! that tender heart may justly accuse me of ingratitude! But, can Beatrice be unacquainted with my sentiments? Her own, together with so many proofs of pure and delicate affection, must surely convince her of the empire she has acquired over me!—No, rather let her for ever remain ignorant of my unhappy attachment. Such is my wish, and such my resolution!"—As Oliver thus spoke, his face was bathed in tears:—He fell into a reverie, and with his eyes steadfastly fixed upon the walls which surrounded the duchess, he remained more than two hours in uninterrupted contemplation. At length he thought of retiring to his room, when casting his eyes towards the top of the gallery which communicated with the apartment of the duchess, he perceived a thick volume of smoke, which, proceeding from the roof, appeared of the blackest hue, contrasted as it was with

with the azure of a clear and serene sky. At the same instant the flames broke through the tiling, which began to separate and tumble from the roof. Oliver rushed into the palace ; he was unacquainted with the private passage to the duchess's room ; he knew of no other entrance than through the gallery, and without any hesitation he determined to pass it. It was now two in the morning ; the apartments of the princess formed a wing of the castle, which was only occupied by the ladies of the court, the domestics, and the guards. The knights and the other inhabitants of the castle lodged in pavilions separated from the palace by large courts and long terraces ; all was sunk in profound sleep. The centinels, however, who were upon the watch, perceiving the flames, sent out the soldiers of the guard, and gave the signal of alarm. Oliver heard the signal, but he had now traversed half of the gallery. The conflagration increased with astonishing rapidity, and had already reached the door of the princess's chamber. The thickness of the smoke, the violence of the flames, the falling in of the walls, rendered the passing of the gallery equally perilous and difficult. Oliver, as he went along it, cried out with a loud voice to the duchess, to make her escape through a back-stair-case. At the voice of Oliver, Beatrice awoke ; she sprung from her bed in terror, and had just time to throw a muslin undress over her shoulders. At this instant her door opened, she saw the gallery all on fire, and the Knight of the Swan in the midst of the flames ! He darted towards her, seized her hand, and drew her towards the other door of the chamber. Beatrice, all astonished, led him to the head of the small stair-case ; and there, being no longer able to support herself upon her trembling legs, she staggered, and appeared ready to sink on the floor. Oliver snatched her in his arms, ran down the stairs, went through a passage, and opened a door which

led to a terrace. Apprehending the destruction of the whole palace, he was anxious to remove the duchess to some distance, and determined upon carrying her to Axiana's pavilion; and for this purpose it was necessary to cross a considerable part of the garden. Beatrice had not fainted away, but the emotion she felt, and the terror with which she was seized, deprived her of all power of motion and speech. Oliver, for the first time now forgetting all his sorrows, and transported with the purest delight, nevertheless experienced a painful embarrassment on perceiving Beatrice half naked in his arms. Ah! who can define true love, and say what contrary sentiments it is able to produce!—Oliver pressed to his heart the woman he adored, and the most beautiful woman in the universe, and yet he would rather have seen her walk by his side. The negligent and disordered condition, in which he beheld her, wounded the idolatrous veneration he had for her; he bore her with superstitious respect, venturing neither to press her in his arms, nor to look at her; it seemed as if he were fearful of profaning the object of his secret worship. He gently laid down his lovely burden at the foot of a tree, thirty paces distant from Axiana's pavilion; and then fell upon his knees, and joining his hands together, lifted them to heaven. He remained silent, but the rays of the moon fell upon his face, and Beatrice observed every feature brighten with the most passionate expression of satisfaction and love. She saw joy for the first time beam from his eye, and never did the interesting countenance of her lover appear before to such an advantage. “O my deliverer,” cried she, “I may henceforth be proud of my existence, I owe it to you. I may now surely be allowed to declare the tenderest of sentiments, the sentiments of unbounded gratitude.”—On uttering these words in broken accents, Beatrice held forth her hand. Oliver, who was still

on his knees, seized and pressed it with transport. At this instant the door of Axiana's pavilion opened. "Return to the palace," said Beatrice, "I am indeed under no apprehension for my friends there, because my apartments only are contiguous to the gallery; but see whether necessary measures have been taken to quench the fire, and return to me to Axiana's pavilion." At these words Oliver arose, and withdrew in haste, for he perceived the countess herself advancing towards Beatrice. Upon the signal of alarm, every one in the castle had arisen, and almost all the knights were already under arms, intending to hasten to the ramparts, supposing the signal announced an attack of the enemy. Axiana had conceived the same idea; but she was soon undeceived by the appearance of the flames, and by meeting the duchess. The two princesses retired to the pavilion; a great number of people quickly repaired successively thither to make inquiries after Beatrice; and from them she learned that the fire had been stopped, but that it had communicated itself to her chamber, and the wall against which her bed was placed had fallen in. This circumstance gave Beatrice secret delight; she considered, that, had not she been awakened by the cries of Oliver, nothing could have preserved her life; and Love found inexpressible pleasure in the recital of every particular, which could aggravate the idea of the danger she had escaped.

In the mean while, the day began to appear, and Oliver did not return; and now a new signal alarm was heard, and the cry of To arms! instantly followed. The enemy taking advantage of the disorder arising from the conflagration, had made a sudden attack upon the ramparts. Axiana, and the knights who were present in the pavilion, fellied forth in haste. Mirva rushed forwards to accompany them, saying he was going to join Oliver, and that he

he would separate from him no more ; but the trembling duchess stopped him a moment to make him promise he would return every quarter of an hour, to bring her an account of the assault. Mirva promised to obey her, and then ran to join the combatants. Beatrice shut herself up in a closet with Amalberga, Delia, and Sylvia. In her present state the duchess found her sole consolation in the society of those three ladies, and chiefly of the two last, who betrayed a concern equal to her own. Bathed with tears, and in the arms of her friends, she counted every moment, and startled at the least noise. Axiana's pavilion, however, was situate in such a manner, that nothing which passed on the ramparts could be heard from it ; but the expectation of news made the duchess shudder every time a door was opened, or the sound of footsteps were heard in the adjacent chambers. Often would she arise and listen on the stair-case ; and when she imagined she distinguished the hasty footsteps of Mirva, or the arrival of a courier, her spirits failed her ; she was ready to sink ; and when she had listened for a while with anxious, but unavailing attention, she grew terrified at the long silence, and her tears flowed with new bitterness. At other moments she invoked the supreme Being with all that sublime and consolatory fervour which sentiment gives to piety ; her pure and angelic soul was then alive to hope. After making a long prayer, she felt her courage revive ; but soon she began to relapse by degrees into all the agony of grief. At the end of a tedious hour, she dispatched a page to the ramparts ; he returned to inform her, that Thederic, having assembled the French troops he had brought, had repaired to the spot where the Knights of the Swan were combating ; that these troops, on recognising Oliver, had expressed their joy by redoubled acclamations, and that the Knights of the Swan, having requested count Thederic to entrust two hundred of these soldiers

diers under their command, had just made a sally at the head of that little troop. This intelligence served only to increase the distress of Beatrice ; each moment brought new alarms ; she returned to the palace ; the fire was entirely gotten under, but the duchess surveyed the gallery in order to have an idea of the dreadful peril from which Oliver had delivered her. She remained more than an hour among the ruins of her apartment ; she was unable to quit the spot ; she still fancied she beheld Oliver there surrounded with the flames, walking over the burning rafters, and braving the most terrible dangers to hasten to her relief.

From the palace were heard the shouts of the combatants ; but this frightful noise did not produce upon Beatrice its accustomed effect. She knew that Oliver was not upon the ramparts. At length, at noon, a great tumult was heard, and the defeat of the enemy, who, being driven from the fortifications, had given way on all sides, was announced. She demanded in great trepidation an account of the Knights of the Swan, and was informed, that their little troop had made an unexpected attack upon a large corps of reserve, commanded by Hartrad, count of Thuringia ; that the Knights of the Swan had been seen pursuing the vanquished over the plain, and that Thederic and the other French knights, together with Grimaldo, the four sons of duke Aimon, and a great number of soldiers, had just gone down thither to prevent the Knights of the Swan from being enveloped by the troops repulsed from the ramparts. A quarter of an hour after it was announced to the princess, that their victorious party was entering the castle with a great multitude of prisoners. At this instant the door suddenly opened, and young Mirva came running into the room - quite out of breath, crying out as he entered, “ We have beaten your enemies ; the Knights of the Swan have attacked the troops of Hartrad.

Isambard

Isambard has slain the count of Thuringia; all the men are made prisoners; the conquerors are bringing them to the castle." Upon this the happy Beatrice snatched Mirva to her arms, and embraced him with tears of joy. "Come," said Mirva, "come and see our warriors return; O! what a fine sight it is!"—Thus speaking, he drew the princess along. Being arrived on the grand staircase of the court, the duchess startled as she distinguished the cries of the conquerors, and on hearing songs of joy. She asked Mirva, who the troops were who were thus singing. "They are the French soldiers," replied Mirva; "and they are singing the song of Oliver, which is always their custom before and after a victory."—Beatrice heard the skies resound with the dear name of Oliver, and the triumph, which these songs celebrated, now appeared a thousand times more glorious and splendid. At length the victorious warriors arrived; Oliver, covered with dust and blood, preceded all the rest. This was to announce to the duchess, that Isambard had killed the count of Thuringia. "Without the death of Hartrad," continued he, "his troops would not have laid down their arms; thus, madam, it is my brother who has delivered you from so formidable an enemy, and it is to him you owe the most important success of this memorable day."—"Ah, seignior," interrupted Beatrice, turning pale, "your armour is bloody, you are wounded!" Oliver in fact had received a slight wound; but, observing the distress of the duchess, he assured her that his clothes were stained only with the blood of the enemy. As soon as the other knights arrived, Oliver withdrew, retired to his chamber to have his wounds dressed, and after a few hours repose he returned to the saloon. The court was not yet assembled: one of the pages of Beatrice came to inform Oliver, that the princess wished to see him, and was waiting for him in her closet. Oliver

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ver had just passed three hours alone, and in the indulgence of his own reflections ; he had ruminated upon the events of the day ; he dwelt particularly upon that moment in which, after the escape from the palace, Beatrice, at the foot of the tree, had expressed her gratitude in so tender and impassioned a manner. Oliver was persuaded that, had it not been for the sudden arrival of Axiana, he would not have been able to dissemble the sentiments of his heart. Knowing his own weakness, and the danger of such tender interviews, he renewed the vows which honour and friendship demanded, and he made the virtuous resolution to put an end to all Beatrice's hopes, by persuading her, that he was no longer susceptible of a new passion ; that he had for her an exalted admiration only ; and that the resemblance she bore to Celenira was the sole cause of the disorder she had so often noticed in his demeanor.

Beatrice, on his entering the closet, viewed him for some minutes with the most tender looks of concern ; the fatigues of the day, the wound he had received, and above all, the conflict of passions which had just been tearing his breast, had strongly imprinted upon his face the traces of sorrow and pain. Tears of gratitude trickled down Beatrice's cheek as she observed that his hair was finged.—She remained a long while unable to speak ; at last she broke silence. She recapitulated, with enthusiastic warmth, all he had done for her ; and she expressed what she felt without any degree of constraint. Oliver replied in a respectful manner, but his reserved deportment chilled the soul of Beatrice. After a moment's reflection, "Hear me," said she, "I can no longer exist without knowing the state of your heart.—I can yield to all your inclinations, I can sacrifice my dearest projects to your scruples ; but it is impossible for me to support any longer the suspense which tortures my soul. Ah ! if you love me, whatever may be your resolutions,

resolutions, I am not to be lamented.—Speak, Oliver, is it solely to your generosity, that I am indebted for the important services you have rendered me; for so many affecting proofs of unbounded attachment and devotedness?" At this painful and terrible question, the unhappy Oliver felt his heart ready to burst; but calling forth all his virtue, he had the courage to reply, in a firm manner, that since the death of Celenira his soul was for ever inaccessible to love. He endeavoured to soften this positive declaration, by the assurances of the deepest sense of admiration. Beatrice, quickly interrupting him, "Ah, cruel Oliver," exclaimed she, "why have you snatched me from death?"—At these affecting words, Oliver, all distracted, fell at the feet of Beatrice; the duchess arose, and withdrawing herself from him, "At least," said she, "spare me the fatal repetition of feelings which have so often led me astray.—Go, Oliver, be not afraid of having humbled my pride: I deplore my weakness, but I need not blush at it; it is ennobled and justified by your services and favours. I have neither the inclination nor the right to complain of you; it is true, and I must confess it, that I thought you loved me, and I upbraid myself with that error; for I ought to have imagined, that in a soul like yours, compassion and generosity could produce what was never before inspired but by love." On saying this, the duchess advanced towards one of the doors of her closet, and after taking a few steps she returned, and finding Oliver in the same place, absorbed in grief and still upon his knees, she made him arise, and told him, in a hasty manner, that having taken a concern in the happiness of Zemni, and knowing that he was enamoured with Sylvia, who loved him again, she would charge herself with his fortune, and solicit the consent of Theobald to their nuptials; but that she would not take such a step till she had first mentioned her intentions to Oliver.

After

After this explanation Beatrice abruptly left the room, without asking or waiting for any reply.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE SCISSORS.

— O doux momens d'horreur empoisonnés !

Cher et fatal objet de douleur et de joie !

Alzire de VOLTAIRE.

OLIVER quitted the apartment in a state of desperation, and retired to his own chamber, where he shut himself up to give free course to his lamentations and tears. An hour before supper-time Isambard knocked at his door. Oliver recognised the voice of his friend, and that voice made a soft impression upon his heart. Oliver had just been making a sacrifice to the memory of Celanira, which was truly heroic, and above all to friendship, and he felt that the presence of Isambard would prove a great consolation to him; and, in fact, during the rest of the evening, he did not experience that secret embarrassment, with regard to his friend, which, in spite of his endeavours, had oppressed him for some time past: far from shunning his looks he delighted in meeting them, and peace and calmness seemed to revive in his soul every time he cast his eyes upon him.

The next morning Oliver walked out early with Mirva upon the ramparts; the intrepidity which that boy had displayed the preceding day, had rendered him as interesting as he was before amiable. Mirva, beside being the object of the princess's tenderest carefes, appeared particularly engaging in the eyes of Oliver.

Oliver. The knight was desirous of giving him lessons in the art of war, and it was with this view that he took him to inspect the fortifications. Mirva was a sensible, courageous, and affectionate child : he was very fond of Oliver, and standing by him upon a bastion, he was listening with great attention to his instructions, when the knight was suddenly wounded by two stones which were hurled from the plain. The one falling upon his breast, laid open the wound he had received the foregoing day ; the other struck him upon the left shoulder. Mirva could not refrain from tears on seeing Oliver's blood trickle down ; he applied his handkerchief to the wound, and the Knight of the Swan, leaning upon the boy, returned back to the castle. Fearful of meeting Beatrice upon the terrace, he took a circuitous and solitary road. He walked slowly, for he was in great pain, and suffered particularly from the contusion he had just received in his shoulder ; his arm was already prodigiously swelled, and tortured him exceedingly. He proceeded in a sorrowful manner, when, at the turning of a walk, he perceived the duchess and Sylvia thirty paces off coming to meet him. It was impossible now to shun them. Beatrice had cast her eyes upon him, she had observed how pale he was, had seen the blood which stained his garments, and seized with grief and terror, she hastily approached him. Oliver was so distressed, that, being no longer able to support himself upon his tottering legs, he sat down upon a bank. Beatrice, out of breath with fear, questioned Mirva. "The wound," replied the child, "he received yesterday has opened afresh."—"How," returned Beatrice, "was he wounded yesterday?"—"Alas, he was, but he forbade me to mention it to you."—"Ah, Mirva! run, fly to the palace, and bring us succour."—Upon this, Oliver assured her he was able to walk to the castle. He then endeavoured to arise, but sunk down again, and Mirva set off and disappeared

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in an instant. Oliver protested to Beatrice, that his wound was trifling, and that his pain was only occasioned by the blow he had received on the shoulder and the swelling of his arm. "If that be true," said Beatrice, "you will obtain immediate ease, by laying open the sleeve of your coat." On saying this, the duchess took a pair of scissors out of her pocket. Oliver turned pale. "In the name of heaven, madam," cried he, "deign to leave me.—No, I cannot allow—" He could say no more; but observing that the duchess did not listen to him, and that she was going to cut open his sleeve, his embarrassment and emotion, together with the extreme pain he felt, were such, that his strength entirely failed him, and he fainted away in the arms of the terrified princess. Love inspired the duchess with resolution; Sylvia assisted her in supporting the knight: she then knelt down, and taking hold of his left arm, she cut open the sleeve of his coat, and uncovered part of the limb. On examining his arm, she instantly perceived, by the colour, and tension of the skin, that it was strongly compressed by a bracelet; she sighed, on concluding she was going to discover some former pledge of the tenderness of Celanira. Being desirous of untying the bracelet in order to give Oliver relief, she cut the sleeve entirely open; but what was her surprise at finding her own pearl necklace!—This discovery, which left no doubt respecting the sentiments of Oliver, transported Beatrice with admiration, gratitude, and delight, and at the same time aggravated the alarming disquietude she was under at the situation of her lover. "O, thou most virtuous and most affectionate of men," exclaimed she, shedding a torrent of tears, "shall I believe my own eyes?—What! thy heart then was in unison with mine!—Am I loved then by Oliver?—Alas, and in what a moment do I make the discovery!—When he has received perhaps a mortal wound; when, overwhelmed with

with love and terror, I am speaking to him, am calling to him, in vain!—When pressing him in my arms and moaning over him, I am beholding the frightful stillness of death spread over his pale and disfigured countenance!”—On uttering these exclamations, she untied the two rows of pearls; and at the same instant Oliver opened his eyes, and seeing the bracelet in the hands of the duchess, “What,” cried he mournfully, “are you taking it back?”—“Yes,” replied she, “but only to restore it again, and to renew the inviolable vows which I made when I first gave it you by stealth, without daring to make a tender of it!” Beatrice was still speaking, when Sylvia observed, that several persons were coming from the castle and advancing toward them. The duchess wiped away the tears which bathed her lovely cheeks, and the Knight of the Swan, as disturbed and affected as herself, received the precious necklace; and, in order to hide it, hastened to put it in his bosom.

CHAPTER XXIV.

A LOVER CURED.

Monstre ! qui sur mon cœur usurpas tant d'empire,
 Qui dans l'art de tromper mis tant de profondeur !

• • • • •
 Je ne demande point à ce ciel irrité,
 Qu'il hâte ton trépas si long-tems mérité,
 Ni qu'il te livre encore à l'horreur du supplice.
 Un plus long châtiment t'est du par sa justice.
 Ah ! pour te mieux punir de tant d'atrocités,
 Qu'il te laisse des jours flétris et détestés,
 Qu'il grave sur ton front ton caractère infame
 Avec des traits affreux et digne de ton ame ;
 Ou plutôt pour offrir plus d'horreur à la fois,
 Qu'il te montre aux humains telle que je te vois.

Barnevelt de Mr. DE LA HARPE.

WHILST love and faithful friendship gave birth to such affecting scenes of tenderness and heroism in the court of Beatrice, the camp of the allied princes was more than ever the prey to all the evils which discord and hatred necessarily produce. The prince of Greece had already announced his intentions of withdrawing from the alliance of the confederates. The allies had recourse to reproaches, they accused Constantine of perfidy and baseness. The prince of Greece still persisted in his resolution ; he considered with great reason, that when a prince has had the misfortune to undertake an unjust war, both honour and humanity require him to sacrifice every thing in order to break so fatal an engagement ; for these murderous leagues, these belligerent alliances, are nothing more than horrible associations, whenever they are not made for the mere purpose of defence. It is the interest of a nation which justifies them, and equity alone renders them inviolable. In the mean while Adalgise, who
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was still tormented with his passion for Armoſlede, easily geueſſed ſhe inhabited the court of Beatrice, be-cause the Knights of the Swan were there; for he had no doubt but that Ifambard was her lover. Being engaged to depart with the prince of Greece, who was now preparing for his return to Constantinople, Adalgife formed the project of carrying off Armoſlede. By dint of attention and inquiry, he at length diſcovered, that ſhe lived in a lonely habitation ſituate a few miles from the castle. He diſguifeſed himſelf in the habit of a rustic, and ſecretly repaired to the vicinity of the place. He concealed his attendants in a neighbouring wood, and retired to a cottage inhabited by an old man and his ſon. The latter frequently went to Armoſlede's house with ve-geables and flowers. Adalgife communicated to him his deſire of introducing himſelf into the house, de-claring, that he was in love with the miſtreſs of it; and he accompanied this information with a ſum of money, which inspired the peasant with the ſtrongeſt deſire to ſerve him. This young man confeſſed in turn, that he had an iſtrigue with Armoſlede's ſer-vant; "but it is not for love," added he, "for this ſervant, who ſucceeded to the little pretty maid, was neither young nor handsome, but ſhe has made me ſo many advan-ces, and the liberality of her miſtreſs enabiles her to give me ſo much money, that I could not withstand it. She gives me frequent affigna-tions, and always in the night. I repair at the appointed hour to the little door of the kitchen garden. The ſervant comes to open it, afterwards ſhe leaves me alone in the garden, and tells me to remain there till a certain ſignal made at her window informs me I may go to her chamber, without riſk of being met by any other domeſticas. In this manner we ſee one an-other, and I have promiſed to go thither this very night." Adalgife, upon this, entreated the young man to allow him to take his place. The peasant
made

made many difficulties ; but a purse filled with gold quickly removed every scruple. At midnight, after having settled his plan, Adalgise attended at the door of the garden. In the course of a few minutes he heard some footsteps ; a gentle knocking was then made against the wall. He replied to the signal ; the door half opened, and he entered abruptly into the garden. Immediately seizing the servant by the arm and showing a dagger, he threatened to kill her if she made the least noise. The terrified girl took him for a robber, but promised implicit obedience. Adalgise then ordered her to lead him to Armoflede's chamber, with all the necessary precautions and privacy. " Fear nothing," said the maid in a low voice, " the other servants are asleep, and my mistress cannot hear us." Thus saying she led him into the apartment of Armoflede. Adalgise found a light in the room, but Armoflede was not there. " Where then is thy mistress ?" said Adalgise. At this question the servant appeared confounded. " Hear me," returned he, giving her a few pieces of gold, " I am no thief, I want only to see Armoflede ; if thou do what thou art desired, I will reward thee liberally ; if not—" " Well, Seignior," said the maid interrupting him, " I am going to tell you the truth. My mistress is in my chamber."—" How ?"—" She expects my lover there, for it is she who pays him, and who receives him every night." At these words Adalgise shuddered and turned pale, but almost in the same instant began to upbraid himself for his credulity, thinking it was highly improbable, that Armoflede, who was so amiable, so young, and so handsome, could be capable of such baseness. " What an absurd story," returned he ; " and how can the peasant imagine, that it is thou who givest him this rendezvous ?"—" Seignior, there is no light in the chamber where Armoflede receives him." Upon this reply Adalgise shrugged his shoulders, examining from head to foot the

the shrivelled and faded figure of forty years old, who was speaking to him. "Let us lose no time," said he, "if it be true that Armoſlede is in thy chamber, I can only believe it by ſeeing her there; come, lead me to her." On ſaying this, he took a flambeau, and obliged the ſervant to conduct him. She led him up to the garret, and there showed him a ſmall door, making a ſign that that was her room. Adalgife locked the maid in the garret; afterwards, with the flambeau in one hand and the dagger in the other, he ſuddenly opened the door he had been shown, and found himſelf in a little chamber. At the ſame instant a voice, which proceeded from a ſmall couch placed opposite the door, cried out, *O heavens! a light!* Immediately a hideous figure ſtarted from the bed. In this movement ſhe ran againſt a chair, and ſtumbling fell upon the floor with her face towards the ground. Her night-cap had fallen off, and her shift having caught hold of the chair diſcovered her naked legs. The exclamation ſhe had made cauſed Adalgife to ſtart, for the ſound of the voice had much affected him; but on approaching this ſtrange creature, it was not poſſible to ſuſpect it to be Armoſlede. Her withered hand and arm ſeemed to belong to a woman of ſixty, and her head, which was totally bald, ſeemed to conſirm ſuch conjecture; her legs were prodigiously ſwelled, and upon one of them ap-peared an ulcer.—Adalgife, however, deſirous of queſtioning the horriblē creature, ſeized her by the ſhoulders, and, in ſpite of the reſiſtance ſhe made, obliged her to get up; then looking at her lank and pimpled face, what was his ſurprise in recogniſing, in ſpite of this ſtrange metamorphoſis, the diſfigured features of the infamous Armoſlede? It was, in fact, herſelf, who had been reduced to this horrid ſtate by the poison ſhe had prepared with her own hands. She remained ſilent, hoping that Adalgife would not recollect her, but ſhe made the moſt violent ſtruggles to

to escape. Adalgise, detaining her by force, “ O divine Providence,” cried he, “ what, is this dreadful spectacle the young and brilliant Armoflede !— Ah, why cannot I assemble here all my former rivals, all the lovers who have been seduced and betrayed by thee ! Thy presence would quickly reconcile us : I wish them to profit like myself by that terrible lesson which is imprinted upon thy face.”—At these words Armoflede redoubled her efforts to get away from Adalgise. “ O let me,” said he, “ contemplate thy deformity ; no, never did I before behold thy dangerous charms with so much delight !—This frightful metamorphosis is not the work of Time, whose venerable hand acts but slowly, and leaves behind some vestiges and ruins ; but Vice, a thousand times more active and more destructive to beauty, consumes and destroys it with the rapidity of a raging fire. What now remains to thee ? An abject soul, shameful passions, unbridled desires, a hideous and languishing body which verges towards the grave !—Yes, Death, under a frightful aspect, with the horrid features of a gorgon, is already waiting to seize thee ; dost not thou see him approach, accompanied by the horrible train of excruciating and unavailing Regret, impotent Rage, Opprobrium, and remorseless Despair ?”—On saying this, Adalgise, who spoke with great vehemence, and who still held his poniard in his hand, made a gesticulation which appeared to frighten Armoflede. “ Fear nothing,” continued he, “ I confess I came here intending to carry thee off or to stab thee ; but Heaven has taken upon itself my vengeance. Now, far from desiring thy death, I could wish it might be deferred for a season. Live the terror of the perverse ; live to drain out the bitter dregs of the cup of infamy ; to envy the success of beauty ; to tremble at the sight of innocence and happiness—In the very bosom of ignominy, mayest thou continually behold the pictures of happy love and triumphant virtue ;

aye, such is the fate eternal justice has in reserve for thee. Thou shalt not close thy execrable career before thou hast suffered all the torments of consuming envy, of implacable and unavailing hatred ; before thou hast experienced every kind of insult and outrage ; and when arrived at the brink of the grave, thine eyes, then struck with a dazzling and terrible light, shall survey with consternation the depth of the destruction thy passions and thy inpiety have prepared for thee. In the convulsion of hopeless agony thou shalt perceive all the horror of Vice without being able to hate her, and thou shalt know that there exists a God, and be unable to invoke him." At this discourse Armoflede no longer could contain herself; at length she began to speak, and in the shape and tone of an abominable fury, she vented her rage in a torrent of injurious expressions. Adalgise listened calmly without interrupting her ; he seemed to enjoy her unavailing frenzy, and when she had left off speaking, he called the servant, and ordered her to take the torch ; then turning to Armoflede, " I believe," said he coldly, " it is time to put an end to this interview ; allow me, madam, to conduct you to your own apartment, for to-night you will expect in vain the happy lover, on whom you lavish your favours with such ingenious privacy." On saying this he drew Armoflede along in spite of her resistance, repeating every thing which the most cutting irony could express. At last, having exhausted his contempt and hatred, he left the house with an aversion and disgust equal to the love he had felt on entering it. Such is the nature of human passions ; and they would be less dangerous were the fragility of them better known. We imagine them to be durable, and rooted, because they are violent, and we combat them with despondency. Yet a simple incident, a violent despite, a physical revolution, and frequently a single reflection, suffice to destroy them.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE STORY OF AXIANA.

On est rarement grand, au faite des grandeurs.

SAURIN.

OLIVER's wounds, having been examined by the surgeons, were declared not to be dangerous; but, as he had a slight fever upon him, he was advised to keep his bed for a few days. The following day, the two princesses, with Isambard and Roger, being in his chamber, the conversation fell upon the exploits and adventures of the countess. They asked her many questions; Beatrice, among other things, inquired of her why she did not take the title of queen, as Balahac, her husband, had been crowned king of Carcassone. Axiana replied, that she could not gratify the curiosity of the duchess without entering into a long detail; the company pressed her to relate her story; she consented to their request, and thus began.

" Among the rocks of Asturia subsist some ruins of an ancient mansion; the remains of a fortress, which was formerly the respectable asylum of the great Pelagius, and the fugitive Goths, who under his guidance escaped, like him, from the tyranny of the Arabs, are there still to be seen *. In this savage and desert country was I born. My father, under a borrowed name, had retired to this deep solitude, attended by one faithful domestic only; he had with his assistance, erected a simple cottage in the midst of the decayed fortress, and this humble habitation joined one of these ruins which was called the tower

* I have inserted the history of this revolution in *The Annals of Virtue*, Vol. II.

of Pelagius. My father concealed with equal care both my sex and my birth. As long as he lived I wore a coarse and rustic dress similar to his own. He called me Favilla, and I always believed myself his son; I likewise thought I had a brother. Balahac, who in his infancy was put into the hands of my father, was the companion of my childhood, and, being kept under this double mistake, considered me only as a beloved brother. He was six years older than myself, and he took delight to initiate me in the exercises in which he himself excelled. He taught me to draw the bow, to handle the fling, to climb the most rugged rocks, to leap hedges and ditches in the chace, and to swim over torrents in my way. The care of instructing me and inuring me to my toils was the most engaging occupation of his life. My father observed, with great delight, his tender attentions towards me, and he neglected nothing that would give encouragement to them. He required me to show my brother every mark of respect, and all the submission of dependence; but Balahac did not make improper use of the power he had acquired over me. I remember, however, he was used to afflict himself during my infancy at the smallness of my person, and my feminine features; but when I had attained my thirteenth year this external delicacy served to increase the tender interest he felt for me; he became every day more fearful of exposing me. Far from calling forth my courage, he employed all his authority over me to moderate it; and at the race or hunt I have seen him turn pale and tremble if he apprehended the least danger attended me. He now began to extend his kindest solicitude even to the most trivial concerns; he would often take delight in braiding my hair. If I entangled my locks in the branches as I ran through the copse, he would dart to my relief, and feelingly lament my giddiness; on my account he dreaded even the heat of the sun, and would never allow me to

stray

stray among the rocks, or frequent the plain, during the middle of the day ; he would lead me to the wood, or to some thick shelter, and whenever my father gently rebuked him for spoiling by these cares the early education I had received, ‘ I confess,’ replied Balahac, ‘ that I find something so delicate and interesting in his person that softens me, and inspires me with a weakness I am at a loss to account for. I cannot, without pain, observe his feeble hand hurl a weighty stone or draw a bow longer than himself ; I suffer at the sight of his shoulders bending under the weight of an enormous quiver. Do not we look with pain at a tender flower, when, shaken by the wind, it wavers upon its tender stalk, and appears ready to break ? I experience the like disagreeable impression whenever I see Favilla exposed to the inclemency of the sky, when the sun darts his burning ray upon his face, or when the snow and hail fall upon his head. His constitution appears so tender, that a fall, the least shock, the slightest accident, are sufficient to deprive him of life.’ My father listened to his discourse with a smile ; he fancied he discovered in it a secret instinct, and sentiments which corresponded with the dearest wishes of his heart. We loved this good father with the warmest affection, and in his conduct and conversation we found every thing that could induce us to perform our duty and be enamoured with virtue. He had made seats of moss and turf in the tower of Pelagius, and hither it was his custom to bring us every evening ; and, seating himself between Balahac and myself, he would at one time relate to us the history of the great Pelagius, and that of his successors ; at another he would praise the charms of solitude, and the happiness of living in grateful obscurity unknown to mankind. Frequently he discoursed upon the love and felicity which an union formed by sympathy was able to produce ; and he always concluded by assuring us he had already employed

employed himself in quest of an amiable companion for each of us, and that, when I had attained my seventeenth year, he would marry us both on the same day. Balahac could not conceive how my father could find us wives in the desert we inhabited ; we were far distant from the haunts of men, and had only occasionally met a few shepherdesses on our excursions at some leagues from our cottage ; but they appeared so inelegant, and had such little pretensions to beauty, that we could not entertain any very engaging idea of love and marriage.

" In the mean time my days glided on in the happy calm of the passions and in innocence ; the tenderness of my father and Balahac were sufficient for my felicity. I was equally a stranger to factitious pleasures, to real vexations which arise from opinion, to frivolous gratifications, and the wasting disquietude caused by ambition and pride. I reflected but little, I had no concerns for the future, because my ignorance and the uniformity of my life did not allow me to have the least idea of the revolutions and events which could strike and inflame the imagination ; without mistrust or fear, without foresight or desires, my soul, tranquil, inexperienced, and tender, loved without excess, enjoyed with serenity, and never felt the transport or bitterness of an impetuous sentiment, or the violent emotions of joy or grief. But in this state I was not long destined to remain. I had no sooner entered into my fifteenth year, when my father was attacked with a disorder which he himself judged to be mortal, and in which, unhappily, he was not deceived. After languishing a few days, feeling his end approach, he called us to his bed-side, and gave us notice he was going to impart to us some important truths. I fell upon my knees, and bathed in tears the hand he held out to me. ' I must now,' said he, ' declare your birth and your real name. You are not Favilla, and that male dress conceals the daughter

daughter of Bermudus : your name is Axiana, and I am your father.' 'What,' replied I, 'you are one of the successors of the great Pelagius ; you are the virtuous Bermudus, who has been supposed to be dead for fifteen years past ?' My father was going to reply, when Balahac, whom surprise had rendered motionless, began to speak, and, looking at me with tender confusion, 'O heavens !' cried he, ' Favilla then is a woman !—Axiana, O my dear sister !—' 'No,' interrupted Bermudus, 'Balahac is not the brother of Axiana, for he is not my son.'—' Ah,' returned Balahac with transport, 'you are still my father !' On saying this, he fell on his knees beside me ; he seized my hand and that of Bermudus, and pressed them to his heart, and wept abundantly. 'I had a brother,' said Bermudus, 'and you are his son ; he committed you to my care upon his death-bed ; you were then in your cradle ; from that moment I adopted you, and they to whom you owe your existence could not have loved you better.—' Now,' continued my father, 'I must explain the motives of my conduct. I was thirty years old when I mounted the throne of Asturia *. I succeeded the most cruel of tyrants, and had just gloriously terminated a long and bloody war. Every thing seemed to promise a happy and peaceable reign ; but the irregularities and vices of my predecessor had corrupted the public morals ; for such is the fatal influence of sanguinary despotism. I was desirous of re-establishing order and the laws : hatred and vengeance, and not the love of public good, had overthrown the tyrant. The people, irritated by oppression, and proud at having shaken off their yoke, were aware of their own power, and at the same time utterly ignorant of their true interests. They were become ferocious, suspicious, and turbu-

* Bermudus the First succeeded Mauregat ; the throne was then elective. Bermudus abdicated the throne in 791.

lent. I found it impossible to enlighten them ; and being unable either to serve them or check their disorderly conduct, I took the resolution of abdicating the crown. I retired to the province in which I was born ; but did not enjoy the tranquillity I expected to find there. Mankind always ascribe ambitious motives to those who have acted a grand part ; they commonly consider the sacrifice of rank and authority as nothing else than a transient movement of fear or indignation, or as a deep political manœuvre. With a celebrated name, a man seeks in vain for repose ; he is ever suspicious in the eyes of ambition and intrigue. Of this I was myself a sad example. I was calumniated, persecuted, forced to abandon my solitude, and to wander over my country, without being able to secure a peaceable retreat. In a few years I lost my wife, who died in child-bed of my daughter. Then it was that I formed the resolution of entirely renouncing the world. I caused the report of my death to be spread abroad ; and came and took refuge in this desert. Long experience had taught me, that happiness is incompatible with violent passions ; and thus nature does not furnish them. They are merely the effects of education, which, while it tends to perfect the soul and the understanding, refines our sentiments by inflaming the imagination ; if left to our own inclination, unmoved by the influence of example, and unimpelled by self-love, we should possess sensibility of a gentle but durable kind ; for the constancy of the affections is founded in nature, and levity is the usual production of pride. It was my wish, my children, to render you happy ; it was my wish to unite you one day together ; and, persuaded that sympathy and tender and faithful friendship are the only solid bases of real love, I was willing you should be enamoured with each other before you knew who you were. It was, in fine, my wish, that the imagination should have no influence upon your sentiments ; but

but we are ever led astray by it, while the heart, when it does not make a precipitate choice, never deceives us. It was my des ign not to reveal this mystery till two years hence ; but death, the approaches of which I now feel, at length forces me to unbosom myself.—Balzac—I recommend to you your adoptive sister ; henceforward your tender friend—One who, I hope, will become your wife and your inseparable companion.—In the mean while, as she is too young to be able to know her own heart, or to dispose of it, I require that you do not propose to her, before the expiration of two years, an indissoluble and sacred union. I wish this marriage to happen ; and do not take upon me to prescribe it.'—Upon this, Balzac vowed to consecrate his life to me, whatever, in future, my sentiments and determination might be.—After having heard this generous and affecting vow, my father configned two caskets to our care, which contained the proofs of our birth, a considerable sum in gold, and all my mother's jewels. The rest of the day was taken up in attending to the sage instructions, which my father had committed to writing, and was now reading to us. He advised us to remain in our solitude ; but in case we should resolve to quit it, he prescribed the manner in which we were to conduct ourselves. We passed the whole night by the bed-side of my virtuous father ; at the first dawn of day we received his last benediction, and a few moments afterwards he expired in our arms !—It is impossible to describe what I felt at this terrible instant. My attachment to my father had always been the ruling sentiment of my heart ; and my inexperience, and the education I had received, served to heighten my distress at this irreparable loss. I was sensible, that death was the inevitable termination of the career of life ; but till the present moment, having never seen any one of the persons, who composed what was to us the universe, die, or even disappear, this heart-

rending spectacle presented something incomprehensible : I was as much struck at it, as if I had never had any idea of dissolution. It was not possible to tear me away from my father's chamber. He had been already breathless some hours ; and I still called to him, and made our cottage re-echo with the piercing cries of despair.—At last my strength was entirely exhausted ; Balahac took me in his arms, and carried me to the neighbouring forest. Assisted by the faithful servant of whom I have already made mention, Balahac dug my father's grave, and buried him in the tower of Pelagius ; afterwards he led me to this sorrowful spot, which to us was now become a temple. I trembled as I beheld the grassy seat on which my father was accustomed to repose. I prostrated myself as I perceived the funeral monument which the piety of Balahac had erected, and as I kissed the sacred ground I fell into a swoon. The terrible and sorrowful impression I had received did not prevent my returning to the spot the very next day. Balahac, in order to divert my attention, proposed to me to ornament the road which led from the forest to this revered ruin. We planted two hedges of laurels interwoven with sweetbriars and vines, and we filled up the breach which opened to the court with wild orange and lemon trees. Each morn at sun-rise we repaired to the grave to invoke the Supreme Being and the manes of my father, thus in this double homage confounding two sublime sentiments, which being both drawn from nature, have in fact the same source ; namely, religious and filial piety. I passed the first three months which succeeded the death of my father, under an oppression of spirits which rendered me incapable either of reflecting upon my situation, or forming plans for futurity ; but at length I gradually recovered from this kind of annihilation ; my ideas now became clear, and I began to feel the necessity of looking forwards, and of maturely weighing

ing the counsels of my father. The idea which most struck me, was the high rank he had filled. I fancied that the daughter of Bermudus, the daughter of a king, ought neither to act nor think like the obscure Favilla. I had the choice of two plans, that of remaining in the desert, or of living in the world. I felt myself much inclined to choose the latter, notwithstanding the frightful picture my father had so often drawn of the dangers to which we are exposed in a numerous society. Curiosity alone would have determined my choice, independently of the growing vanity which gave me such a distaste for obscurity. But I had a sincere friendship for Balahac, and I was sensible that all his inclinations and desires led him to prefer the solitude we inhabited. The certainty of giving him pain was a strong motive in favour of the choice he approved ; yet in spite of my affection for him, and although his tenderness for me increased, I ceased, upon the death of my father, to have my former confidence in him. He was now become my only support in the desert ; yet I felt, in a confused manner, that equality no longer subsisted between us : this idea rendered him less agreeable, and at the same time inspired me with a kind of fear which doubled the embarrassment I felt on entering upon a positive resolution. Balahac, respecting my youth and the injunctions of my father, spoke neither of love nor marriage ; but ever at hand, he scarcely quitted my sight, and his extreme importunity often became troublesome to me. His presence overawed me to such a degree that it clogged my very thoughts ; it seemed to me that he was able to penetrate them, and I did not venture to give way to the indulgence of projects contrary to his inclination. Little accustomed to act a feigned part, this constraint became every day more painful.

“ My father, as I have already said, had given us two caskets ; Balahac had undertaken the charge of that

that which contained the gold and papers, and I had kept the other, which I knew was filled with my mother's jewels. Long absorbed in grief, I had lost all thoughts of the casket; at last I recollect it on a sudden, and felt the most eager curiosity to open it; but wishing to examine its contents at my ease, I imagined that Balahac would consider the scrupulous search I intended to make as childish, and I determined upon opening it in his absence, and unknown to him. After having made this resolution, I endeavoured to find means of ridding myself of Balahac for a few hours, and before I could succeed I made many unavailing attempts. At last, one morning when he set out on the chace, I invented so plausible a pretext for not accompanying him, that he consented to leave me behind in the cottage. As soon as he was gone I shut myself up in my room, took my casket, of which I had the key at hand, and opened it in haste. The first thing that caught my attention was a miniature portrait of my mother; her name was engraved round the border. I was unable to judge of the resemblance; but having never seen a picture, I was seized with admiration on considering this work, which appeared in my eyes a master-piece of art. At the same time my eyes overflowed with tears, as I contemplated the features of her to whom I owed my existence.—When this natural emotion was a little calmed, I examined with attention the sumptuous clothing of this charming portrait; I was quite dazzled at it, and sighed on comparing my rustic garb with the elegant dress of my mother. More eager than ever to continue my research, I laid the portrait upon a table, and took out, one after the other, all the jewels which the casket contained. There were many among them of which I had no idea of the use, but the portrait indicated that of the necklaces, the hair-pins, the bracelets, and the rings. In my eyes each ornament had the merit of novelty. I was equally

equally surprised and charmed ; I could not tire myself with admiring the brilliancy and marvellous workmanship of these splendid baubles ; and I soon experienced the most ardent desire to ornament my own person with them, at least for some moments ; and looking at the portrait in order to adjust them properly, I began by fastening in my hair a pin of sapphire and rubies ; but as my coat entirely concealed my neck and bosom, I tore it open in order to display them to view : I then put on a diamond and pearl necklace. I tucked up my long sleeves, and ornamented my arms and hands with bracelets and rings of precious stones. I had no looking-glaſs, and even was unacquainted with the use of one ; but, desirous of seeing myself thus set off, I ran into the garden, and approaching a basin of clear water which lay under the shade of a grove of poplars, I sat down upon the graſs beside the fountain, and looked at myself in the water, which perfectly reflected my person. The manner in which I was dressed afforded a double contrast which was extremely ridiculous ; in the garb of a man, I had my breast open and my arms uncovered like a woman ; and upon garments made of the coarseſt ſtuff, sparkled the moſt magnificent ornaments. On admiring myself, I had only made the latter remark, and I regretted not having a purple and azure dress like that repreſented in my mother's picture. The novelty of the ſpectacle, besides, contributed greatly to the pleasure I felt in thus con templating my person ; for the firſt time, I now examined my features, and compared myself to the other objects I had ſeen ; to the peafant girls I had met on my excursions. I was conſcious I was handsome ; this diſcovery made me ſet a value upon beauty, and at the ſame time I conſidered it hard to hide and bury it in a deſert. These reſlections, and many others, which had never before obtruded themſelves upon my mind, for a long while engaged my attention.

tion. At length, starting from my reverie, I was going to tear myself away from this dangerous fountain, when lifting up my eyes, and turning my head, I perceived Balahac, who had been standing near me for more than a quarter of an hour looking at me in silence. I gave a loud shriek, and, for the first time in my life, I experienced the painful sensation of shame and confusion. My natural modesty, and the remorse I felt at being guilty of this frivolous vanity, caused me an inexpressible embarrassment. My first movement was to cover my neck and draw down my sleeves ; I then endeavoured to run away, but Balahac laying hold of me, ‘ Ah ! of what art thou afraid ?’ cried he, with a tremulous voice. ‘ O, let me still survey thee !’ These words, the tear which wet his eyelids, the emotion which his countenance betrayed, increased my embarrassment, but dispelled the apprehensions I had conceived of his severity. I made no reply ; I was standing up, and as the dread I had just felt deprived me of the power of remaining upon my legs, I sat myself down again upon the grassy bank of the fountain, with my hand closely pressed against my bosom, in order to keep my torn garment from falling open. Balahac now threw himself at my feet, and at this I started with surprise ; he then arose and sat down by me. He kept profound silence, and I did not venture to look at him ; I heard him sigh several times : and in this posture we remained for more than half an hour ; when Balahac, breaking silence, addressed me in a calmer and bolder tone of voice. ‘ O, my sister,’ said he, ‘ be far from thinking that these vain ornaments can embellish you.—It is true, I contemplated you with surprise and rapture.—But it was yourself I was admiring, and not your finery, which in my eyes is both useless and absurd. Why did our father think it necessary to leave us these fatal superfluities ? And why, my dearest Axiana, cannot you disdain as much as I despise them !’ On saying this,

Balahac

Balahac could not refrain from weeping. I was deeply affected at what he had been saying, but this transient emotion had no effect upon my secret resolutions.

" This interview taught me that I had a kind of ascendancy over Balahac, though I was ignorant of the cause ; but every moment since that period served to demonstrate its supreme power. The discovery gave me new embarrassment, and created a kind of reserve in my conduct, for which I was unable to account ; and at the same time it determined me in my projects ; for I was certain that Balahac would not thwart my inclinations. Impatient to show myself, eager to admire the works of nature and art, and to behold new objects, I ventured at last to entreat Balahaç to leave our solitude. He felt much concern, but since the adventure of the fountain he had been prepared for the request, and, as I had foreseen, he complied, after having vainly endeavoured to dissuade me from it. He only required that, on entering into the world, I should continue to conceal my sex, and let it still be supposed we were brothers. I did not leave our desert without shedding many a tear on the tomb of Bermudus, and without feeling a kind of remorse at the thought of leaving the revered ashes of my virtuous father in this solitude. Our domestic, or rather friend, accompanied us, and served us as a guide. He conducted us to one of the towns which my father had marked out, in case we should abandon our peaceable asylum. Our journey was long, but fortunate. We arrived at the town about the middle of the day. On entering, we observed a great tumult, and I saw, for the first time in my life, a multitude of armed men. The dress of the soldiers appeared extremely splendid to me. I admired especially their carriage, and bold and spirited countenances. We were informed, that these troops

troops belonged to the celebrated Abderahma, that valiant general who had come from the depth of Asia to dethrone the tyrant who oppressed the Saracens. A large party of this people had rebelled against their king, and repaired to the standard of Abderahma, and on this very day the gates of the city had been opened to this famous warrior (33). As we entered the principal square Abderahma made his appearance. He was mounted upon a white horse, and was distinguished from all the rest by his beauty, his majestic stature, and the magnificence of his armour. A thousand shouts of joy broke forth at the sight of him; and these acclamations, these splendid homages which I had never before seen rendered, inspired me with respect and admiration bordering upon enthusiasm. My cheeks were covered with tears, my heart beat with violence, I breathed with difficulty, when all on a sudden the troops filed off before Abderahma to the sound of martial music. I had never heard but rustic voices, and the flutes of the shepherds of our deserts; the loud noise of cymbals, of trumpets, and of drums, inspired me with the warmest transports I had ever felt. Seized with an universal agitation, I shivered and burnt at the same instant; a thousand tumultuous and novel sensations disturbed my reason, and inflamed my imagination; for the first time I beheld the dazzling image of glory, and I beheld it with transport. When the troops had filed off, Abderahma made an harangue to the people, in which he invited the citizens to take arms, and repair to his standard. Scarce had he spoken, when I pierced through the crowd. I darted towards him, crying out, that I was determined to fight, and would follow him. Equally surprised at the smallness of my stature, my youth, and my action, he called me to him, took me by the hand, and considered me for a moment with astonishment and benevolence; afterwards,

wards, turning towards the multitude, ‘ Friends,’ said he, ‘ what an example is this for you ? Mark the ardour of this charming youth ! ’ At these words the whole multitude cried out that they were ready to enlist. Abderahma, persuaded that my act had greatly contributed to execute this enthusiasm, from this instant conceived the greatest affection for me. At the moment in which I had plunged myself into the crowd, Balahac, having been unable to detain me, had followed me ; I presented him as my brother, and we enlisted together. Abderahma sent us clothes, the form and richness of which struck me with admiration, and it was with expressive delight that I put on a suit of armour which resembled his own, and decorated with his colours. We left the town in quest of the army of the king of the Saracens. When we arrived in presence of the enemy, I surveyed without dread the armed multitude marshalled in order of battle. The education I had received preserved me from the timidity so natural to my sex. Besides, I was under the eye of Abderahma, and was desirous of justifying the opinion he had formed of my courage ; I considered him as the deliverer of an oppressed country, and I believed that the troops under his command would be invincible. I could not, however, repress a sensation of horrour and pity, at the idea of the prodigious number of hostile soldiers, and at the thought that we were only assembled to endeavour to destroy them all. But a look from Abderahma instantly roused me from my sorrowful meditation. I thought his enemies could be nothing better than ferocious monsters, and that humanity even should lead us to desire their destruction. During the combat, I conducted myself with an intrepidity which often caught the attention of Abderahma. Balahac, who was ever at my side, was only solicitous to ward off the blows which were aimed at me. Braving death without seeking for glory,

glory, unmindful of his own safety in the midst of the dangers of battle, he thought only of me, and making a rampart of his body, he fought not to conquer, but solely in my defence. We gained the victory, and the half of the enemy's army was cut in pieces, and the rest ran away. Never shall I forget the horrour with which I was seized, on surveying the field of battle strewed with the dead and dying. I was contemplating the frightful spectacle, and shedding the tears of compassion and remorse, when a messenger arrived to invite me to repair to Abderahma. The reception I met with soon dissipated the terrible impression I had been receiving. I found him surrounded by his victorious troops. The moment I was seen by him, he advanced towards me, took me in his arms, and embraced me, bestowing on me at the same time the most flattering commendations ; my heart leaped for joy, yet his caresses embarrassed me ; and, impelled by a mechanical movement, I cast my eyes upon Balahac. His sorrowful and severe looks intimidated me, I was confounded and blushed, but I was not the less sensible of the glory and sensibility of obtaining the flattering testimony of the general's approbation. A second battle decided the fate of Spain. Abderahma killed the king of the Saracens with his own hand, and all the troops of that unhappy prince laid down their arms, and gave themselves up to the conqueror.

" Notwithstanding all the care of Balahac, I received a slight wound in my right side in this battle. Abderahma, seeing my clothes stained with blood, led me to his tent ; there being desirous of having my wound dressed, he ordered a surgeon to lay open my garments ; at the same instant Balahac rushing between the man and myself, declared he would not allow him to do this. Abderahma was much surprised at this action. He remained motionless, looking

ing stedfastly at me ; at length addressing Balahac, in an imperious manner, he demanded the explanation of this odd behaviour ; but I instantly took upon myself to make reply. I was not sorry to have so natural a pretext for declaring my situation to the hero who had gained such an empire over my imagination, and beginning to speak without any hesitation, ‘ Seignior,’ said I ‘ a single word will justify Balahac, I am a woman. In me you see the daughter of the virtuous Bermudus, king of Asturias.’ I pronounced these words with a kind of emphasis ; I knew that Abderahma was the grandson of a sovereign *, and I felt great pleasure in informing him that I myself was of illustrious birth. At this confession Abderahma made an exclamation expressive at once of astonishment, joy, and admiration. He threw himself at my feet, he said every thing which the most passionate love could inspire. This seductive language, which I now only heard for the first time, made but too deep an impression upon my soul. I thought myself the sport of the sweetest illusion when I beheld the great Abderahma at my feet, and heard myself declared the arbitress of his fate.—However, in the midst of these transports, the importunate idea of Balahac was ever uppermost in my mind. I lifted up my head to look at him, but he was gone. He returned no more, and at night I received a paper from him which contained these words. ‘ If you have any compassion left for the unfortunate Balahac, I conjure you, Axiana, by the sacred name of our father, not to marry Abderahma before the expiration of two years.’

“ This billet gave me great pain. I perceived that Balahac had taken the resolution to leave me, and to remove out of the way. I was conscious I could not accustom myself to his absence, and that

* The caliph Hachem.

his happiness was necessary to my own ; but I interrogated my heart less than my vanity, and the splendour which surrounded Abderahma stamped such a value upon his love, that no other idea could make a deep impression on my mind. However, I made the most resolute determination not to receive the hand of Abderahma before the time prescribed by Balahac. I declared this to Abderahma, and ingenuously related to him my whole history. Abderahma submitted to all I required, but made me promise to remain with him till the time fixed for our nuptials. After having subdued his enemies, Abderahma displayed in his prosperity a generosity and justice equal to the valour he had shown in battle. The vows of the people already named him sovereign of the country he had conquered. We marched towards Cordova, and upon the way Abderahma conversed with me upon his projects, and with rapture I heard him declare, that he only desired supreme power in order to place me upon the throne, and to render his subjects happy. The very day of our arrival at Cordova, he was proclaimed king ; I beheld with transport the coronation of my lover, and the hero I considered the most worthy of uniting the suffrages of a great nation. He publicly declared his engagements with me, placed me in his palace, and caused me to be treated as a queen. He presented me with magnificent female garments, and I now appeared in the dress of my sex. When I was dressed, Abderahma, entering my room, led me into an apartment covered with glasses ; he wished to enjoy my surprise, knowing that that magical invention was unknown to me, since I had only inhabited deserts and camps. My astonishment was inexpressible on seeing my person so often repeated around me ; but I contemplated myself with calmness, notwithstanding the splendour of my ornaments ; I no longer felt the sanguine sensations I had experienced on the bank of the fountain ;

tain ; I had known glory since that period, and a puerile vanity had no longer the power of intoxicating me.

" The first six months of the reign of Abderahma seemed to pass rapidly away ; brilliant entertainments, magnificent spectacles, and varied amusements, allowed me neither time, nor possibility, of reflection. Surprise and curiosity enhanced the value of the most trifling objects ; I enjoyed every thing with transport ; above all, the happiness of seeing Abderahma applauded by the people, and of considering him as adored by them. But at length I began to accustom myself to this kind of enchantment, and by degrees my eyes were opened. Having been long since struck with the spectacle of misery which often presented itself to me in the streets, I had expressed my compassion on the occasion ; Abderahma had replied, that the calamity was only the consequence of the barbarous oppressions of the late king, and that he was taking measures to remedy it. I was aware that money would remove the evil, and I proposed to Abderahma, as the simplest thing in the world, to distribute among the people one half of the treasures I knew him to possess ; he smiled, and exhorted me not to make myself uneasy on that account. I followed his counsel, by giving away all the money I was possessed of, for Balahac, on leaving me, had not taken with him the casket of which he had the care of keeping. The people soon becoming acquainted with my sensibility, made their applications immediately to me, in order to intreat me to prevail upon the king to moderate the taxes he had laid upon them. I had myself instructed in the nature of imposts, and what was my surprise on learning, that Abderahma, far from easing the burdens of the unhappy people, had extorted new contributions from them ; and that the sums exacted from these unfortunate creatures

tures paid for our pleasures, and the sumptuous entertainments with which I had been so much delighted. This frightful discovery filled me with horrour. I immediately took off all my rich clothing, I ordered a garment of common stuff to be brought me, and in this coarse dress I appeared before the king. ‘Abderahma,’ said I, ‘as long as I see any poor in your dominions I shall remain in this garb. I have dismissed the musicians you had given me, and all the splendid train which attended my person; my table shall henceforward be furnished with frugality; I shall no longer be present at those criminal feasts, the expenses of which are borne by your subjects; for being unable to sooth the public misery, I am at least determined to partake of it. If it be true, that you love me, you will applaud these natural sentiments; it is in your power to recover the esteem of Axiana; if not, being disengaged by honour and by virtue itself from all my vows, I shall break for ever the bands which attach me to you.’ My looks and discourse made great impression upon Abderahma; he was moved, and softened, and endeavoured to justify himself; he did not entirely succeed, but I was too ignorant and credulous to perceive all the sophistry of his artful apology; he easily persuaded me, that he was far less culpable than I had thought him to be; he made me a thoufand promises, and we parted satisfied with each other. The feasts, indeed, were suppressed, large gifts were made in my presence to the people, and I saw no more beggars in the streets. I no longer received the petitions of the unfortunate imploring my compassion, I imagined the taxes were abolished, that the care of Abderahma had at length re-established the happiness of Cordova, and I continued more than a year under this delusion.

“ Notwithstanding all the love of Abderahma, I had been no longer happy since the conversation which

which I have been mentioning ; his justification had never appeared to me complete. I had less admiration for him, and the interesting, and mournful remembrance of Balahac recurred more frequently to my mind. I remarked besides, that Abderahma, since he had been king, appeared less enamoured with glory and more alive to praise ; truth sometimes seemed to displease him, and I saw him lavish his favours upon people who had no other merit than that of knowing how to flatter with dexterity. In a word, the pomp of his palace, and the superb monuments which he had erected in Cordova, made me always tremble for his subjects. On my arrival at Cordova I had fixed Silo (for so was our faithful domestic named) in a pleasant country-house in the environs of the city. I frequently visited him there, but Abderahma would not suffer me to go unaccompanied by himself. At this villa Abderahma had spacious stables, and here it was that his hunters were kept : one day, when we were together at this place, he wished to try one of his horses in my presence ; but the horse ran away with him, and on leaping over a ditch stumbled and threw the king, who was stunned to such a degree by the fall, that he remained motionless upon the spot. My cries soon brought out the people of the house, and Silo among them. As soon as the latter saw the king lying senseless upon the ground, he approached me, and slipping a piece of paper into my hand, whispered in my ear these words : *Read this when you are alone in the palace ; my life depends upon your discretion.* I put the note into my bosom, and Silo withdrew in haste. The king recovered the use of his senses ; he had only received a slight contusion on the head ; he determined to go back to Cordova, and we instantly set out. When I was alone, I opened Silo's billet, and read these words. ‘ The evening of the day on which you will receive this, I shall be at midnight in the

little

little court of the palace ; come alone, and open the green door ; I have some important things to communicate to you.' Full of trouble and uneasiness, I repaired to the green door at the appointed moment, and let in Silo, whom I conducted to my closet. Judge what I felt when the virtuous old man began to speak and thus express himself. ' You are deceived, Axiana ; the people who wait on you are devoted to the king ; the memorials which are addressed to you are suppressed ; the people of Cordova groan under the load of taxes ; you see no more beggars in the streets, because they are dragged to prison, in virtue of an edict which forbids misery to implore the succour of the pitiful. I have been commanded to keep silence respecting these calamities, and been threatened with death, should I venture to inform you of them. Watched with indefatigable vigilance, I have not been able to communicate this to you sooner ; I have waited for more than six months for an opportunity of delivering my note to you. Open your eyes, Axiana ; and consider, that the daughter of the great Bermudus cannot give her hand to a tyrant.' At these words I threw my arms round the neck of this virtuous old man : ' O, my true friend !' I exclaimed, and began to weep. I thought on Balalac, and my heart was ready to burst. I gave my jewels to Silo in order to have them sold. ' Be here,' said I, ' in four days, at the same hour ; prepare every thing for our flight, we will return again to our desert ; I will hasten to my father's grave, and die there with compunction and regret.' Such indeed was the resolution I had formed ; for I began to despise Abderahma. Nothing having yet been able to corrupt the sentiments of justice, which the feelings of nature and the force of education had imprinted on my soul, I was shocked and disgusted at pride and vice, which, were it not for the fatal power of custom, would appear in the eyes

eyes of every one as the height of extravagance and inhumanity. On the day appointed Silo returned ; I had taken every necessary precaution for the safety of my elopement, and we set off without meeting with any obstacle. During the whole journey, I thought only of Balahac ; the tender sentiments, which began to revive in my bosom in his behalf, rendered my situation so much the more afflicting, as I was absolutely ignorant what had become of him, having neither received any letter from him, nor heard any account of him, since our separation.

" At length we arrived at our desert ; my tears fell with bitterness on recognising the environs of those peaceable scenes ; but what was my astonishment, when, on approaching our cottage, we observed it to be both enlarged and ornamented ! I pressed forward with eager haste, and my surprise was doubled on perceiving an inscription on the door, written in large characters. Struck with a confusion I am unable to describe, I wiped away the tears from my eyes, and read these words : *Happy love, according to the desire of my father, shall at least inhabit this cottage.* Trembling and ready to sink I was fearful of inquiring into the explanation of this mystery, and I repaired to the grave of Bermudus. On entering the tower, I was motionless with surprise on observing a handsome mausoleum of white marble, in the place of the grassy tomb ; two lamps of porphyry were suspended by golden chains to the sides of a pyramid, upon which the following words were traced : *Filial piety and gratitude have erected this monument to the wisest of men.* ' O my brother,' cried I, ' while I was straying far from thee, thou wert fulfilling my duty : this homage attests at least thy existence, and I have now to weep for myself only !' Thus speaking, I prostrated myself upon the tomb, which I watered with my tears. Suddenly a strange voice was heard near me ; I arose, and with astonish-

ment beheld a young female of beautiful appearance. I questioned her with a trembling voice, and she informed me she lived at the cottage with her husband. I had no doubt but that husband was Balahac. A distressing and novel sensation now preyed upon my soul, and this first movement of jealousy became the more distressing, as I had no right to complain of the change of Balahac. However, I left the tower in order to rejoin Silo, who had stopped before the cottage, and I observed a young man advancing towards me, with whom I was unacquainted; a quick sensation of joy, anticipating all reflection, gave me the presension that this new inhabitant of the desert was the husband of the pretty peasant girl, and I was not deceived. This happy couple informed me, that an illustrious warriour, who commanded in Carcassone, after having united them together, had promised to establish them with all their family in this desert, that he had just embellished it by making the house more commodious and enlarging the garden. I interrupted this recital to ask the name of their generous benefactor, and I was informed he was called Clephis; but in Clephis I could not mistake Balahac. I easily imagined he had changed his name; I determined to hasten to Carcassone, and I set out thither the next morning. Being arrived near the city, I stopped at a farm-house, and sent Silo into the town with directions to see the pretended Clephis, and to give him an exact account of my adventures and my sentiments. When Silo had left me, I asked my hosts many questions relative to Clephis. They informed me, that this warriour had distinguished himself by such noble exploits and generous actions, that the inhabitants of the country, after having elected him their chief, had at length proclaimed him king; and that the new sovereign, since his coronation, that is, within the last month, had taken the name of Balahac. This account did not

not afford me a pure and unmixed joy ; sad experience had created a deep and invincible hatred for royalty, and I was fearful of not finding in Balahac, upon his throne, the affectionate and virtuous sentiments of the companion of my infancy ; I considered however with pleasure, that he had reigned but one month, and that it was unlikely he should be corrupted in so short a time. Towards the evening I saw Balahac make his appearance attended by a numerous and splendid train ; he had left me when I was infatuated with pomp and grandeur, and he was persuaded that, in order to seem agreeable in my eyes, he should present himself to me under this magnificent appearance. I found him more enamoured than ever. He told me he had only desired to gain a celebrated name to gratify my ambition, and in hopes that I should not hesitate between Abderahma and himself, whenever he had a throne to offer me. ‘ Yes, my brother,’ replied I, ‘ my heart is proud of your exploits, but it is glory that I love, and not the dangerous authority of sovereign power. Bermudus abdicated his crown to preserve his virtue ; Abderahma lost his virtue on the acquisition of his crown : these examples are sufficient ; never will I become the wife of a king ; renounce your diadem, and Axiana’s hand is yours.’ Balahac being much astonished at these words, requested me to reflect upon this resolution ; but I so strongly assured him, that it was not to be shaken, that he gave me his word to make the sacrifice I had required. On the next day he solemnly abdicated the crown, and the same sun shone upon the celebration of our nuptials. I proposed to him to return to our desert, but the experiment he had tried of power and his throne had already affected the simplicity of his manners. He was desirous of remaining in a country which re-founded with his glory, and of which the inhabitants would still acknowledge him for their chief ; while

he showed himself worthy of their love by his humanity, his moderation, and his invariable equity. You know the rest of my story : the next year my husband fell at the siege of Carcassonne. I was able to avenge his death, to overcome his enemies, and to force them to make a solid and glorious peace.—The people, who had subjected themselves to Balahac, conferred upon me all the rights which he had possessed. Public gratitude was willing to bestow unlimited power upon me, but prudence and justice taught me to circumscribe it ; and if I had entertained other sentiments, the virtue and the example of the illustrious Beatrice would have made me abjure them.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE GOLDEN SPURS.

L'enfance est si touchante ! Ah quelle ame si dure
N'éprouve en sa faveur le plus tendre intérêt !

Abbé de LILLE.

Et de cet âge heureux que rien n'a corrompu,
Les premiers movemens sont tous pour la vertu.

Menzicoff de Mr. DE LA HARPE.

THE story of the countess exalted the passion which Roger, and the friendship which Beatrice had conceived for that illustrious heroine ; the duchess, looking at Isambard, was making a touching eulogium of the sentiments and character of the amiable Axiana, when a messenger came in great haste to inform the knights, that the enemy was drawing near the ramparts. The princesses and the knights quitted Oliver,

who

who was deeply afflicted at not being able to leave his bed. All the warriors having assembled together, determined to go down to the plain ; and scarce were they arrived there before the combat began, which was carried on for a while with equal success on both sides. On the part of the enemy, the count of Bavaria had the sole honour of this day, in which he displayed all the talents of a great captain, and all the valour of the most intrepid soldier ; thrice he rallied his broken troops, and led them on again to the charge. The generous Barmecide, ever near him, saved his life and his liberty more than once during this battle, in warding off the strokes of his adversaries, and delivering him out of their hands. Gerold was stationed in the centre of the army ; and he combated with Isambard, Thederic, and the other French knights. On the side of Beatrice, the brave Oger commanded the right wing : the giant Bruhier was at the head of that of the enemy. He recognised the Danish knight, whom he had had the glory of conquering ; and he challenged him anew. A moment before, the ferocious Rotbold, assailing Axiana, who was fighting between Oger and Roger, gave her a thrust with his lance. Roger, in endeavouring to ward off the blow, was himself wounded ; then Axiana, after having heard Bruhier propose a single combat to the Danish knight, likewise challenged Rotbold. In vain did Roger claim the right he himself had of chastising him. "No, seignior," replied Axiana, "it is the hand of a woman which must avenge the wrongs of Ordalia and the unfortunate Azoline." After saying these words, she threw her gauntlet to Rotbold. The signal for two single combats was made to the armies ; and immediately all the other warriors suspended their blows ; and while the heralds at arms were tracing out the spot on which Oger and Axiana were to attack Bruhier and Rotbold, Zemni, posting himself by the side of the

the Danish knight, defied, with a loud voice, the perfidious Tryphon, Rotbold's squire, who advanced into the lists with his master. The combat was terrible, and lasted for more than an hour. The dastardly Tryphon took his flight ; but at the same instant a soldier in the ranks, incensed at his cowardice, drew his bow, and pierced him to the heart. Brughier was killed in the field of battle : Rotbold, mortally wounded, lay gasping on the ground. Axiana, immediately leaving him, returned to the ranks in the midst of the acclamations of both armies. The dying Rotbold was carried off to his tent : he lingered several days, in all the agonies of pain, and all the terrors of an impious death. The right wing of the enemy, having lost the two chiefs who commanded, it fell into disorder. At the same time, the king of Pannonia and the duke of Benevento falling with fury upon the enemy's left wing, the confusion became general in the allied army, and was still increased by the approach of night. In vain did Gerold and Barmecide now endeavour to rally the troops, who had broken their ranks, and pressed them forwards in their flight. The defenders of Beatrice followed closely ; but all on a sudden the sky was overcast with clouds, and the night became so dark, that the conquerors, who were apprehensive of falling into some ambuscade, gave the signal of retreat, which was instantly obeyed. In the mean while, Mirva, impelled by his ardour, had imprudently quitted Isambard, who called to him in vain. The boy, in the pursuit of the flying troops, had left the ranks, and galloped forwards as fast as his steed could carry him, without perceiving, for it was dark, how far he had left the army behind him, and that he was taking another road. At last, hearing no more tumults around him, he stopped ; but the darkness was so thick, that he was unable to distinguish any object. He was much embarrassed;

barrassed ; for his inexperience made him despair of extrication. He remained motionless for a long time, considering what steps he should take. At first he heard at a distance the noise of horses, and he did not venture to proceed that way, lest he should fall into the hands of the enemy. By degrees the noise subsided, and at length nothing more was heard. He then ventured to proceed as chance should direct, without the least knowledge of the road he took. In a quarter of an hour the sky began to clear up a little, and Mirva perceived he was in a meadow which was separated from a part of the forest by a deep ditch. At the same time he descried a light at a distance ; he directed his way towards it, and observed that it seemed to gleam from a cottage. In proceeding thither his road lay by the side of the ditch ; when arrived within five hundred paces of the cottage, he cast his eyes towards the forest, and dimly distinguished a horse and a knight lying extended in the ditch. Mirva instantly alighted ; advancing towards the bank, he perceived the horse was dead, and the knight lay senseless, but was still alive. He disengaged the legs of the knight, which lay under the horse ; he then untied the helmet of this warrior, eased him of his weighty cuirass, and not having strength sufficient to lift him out of the ditch, he lay down by him, and in that posture succeeded in raising up his head and shoulders. The unknown knight now began to breathe ; he opened his eyes, and recovered the use of his senses. He was conscious, the moment he began to reflect on his situation, that some unexpected succour had restored him to life ; and in seeking for his deliverer, who sustained his head, and took up so small a space behind him, he met with a little hand, which he knew could not be that of a soldier. At the same instant, a childish voice asked him if he were wounded ? " What," cries the unknown knight, " is it a child

child that has saved my life!"—"How happy am I," interrupted Mirva, "to hear you speak! I may then flatter myself to have saved the life of a man. Oliver, I am sure, when he hears of this, will not chide me for my giddiness, and my princess will be affected at it, will embrace me, and love me still better. But can you get up? I should be so happy to see you on your legs." Upon this, the stranger being deeply affected at the soft voice of his young deliverer, turned his head about, took Mirva in his arms, and pressing him for some time to his bosom, he felt the tears of this engaging boy mix with those he himself shed. At length the warrior, leaning upon the shoulders of Mirva, arose, and left the ditch with him; but so weak was he, that he could not long afford Mirva the satisfaction of seeing him upon his legs. He lay down on the grass; and, questioning the boy, he learnt his age, his name, and that he was the favourite page of the duchess; the warrior then declared, without naming himself, that he was one of the knights of the allied army. After this explanation, the stranger, having recovered his strength, arose, and taking the hand of the boy, "My dear Mirva," said he, "without your assistance I had infallibly perished in this ditch; I can only express my gratitude in yielding myself up your prisoner. I am well acquainted with the spot where we now are; I shall be able to guide you; come on, you shall present me to your princess, and I may venture to believe she will set some value upon this homage." "No, no," replied Mirva, "those only are prisoners who are taken in battle. When the combat is over there are no more enemies; but I confess I have often envied the knights who have had the happiness of bearing their glorious trophies to Beatrice; if, then, you will give me a piece of your armour, I shall feel the highest gratification in presenting it to my princess."—"I will do more," replied the knight; "I will bring

bring it you myself to-morrow morning ; and of this I give you my word."—" Well," returned Mirva, " you will bring me back my horse at the same time, for I shall lend him to you, to enable you to return to night to your camp." The stranger, deeply affected, refused the generous offer ; but Mirva insisted so forcibly, telling him he would take guides from the cottage to conduct him to the castle, that the knight at last consented to what he desired ; for he knew that Mirva could reach the castle in three quarters of an hour. He accompanied him to the cottage ; procured him guides, whom he paid generously, adding, that the princess would likewise recompense them ; he then tenderly embraced Mirva, mounted his horse, and took his leave of him, repeating his promise of visiting the court of Beatrice the next morning early.

Mirva's return caused an universal joy at the castle. Every one was fond of him ; and ever since the return of the troops, the Knights of the Swan and the duchess were under the greatest uneasiness on account of this charming child. Mirva was chidden and caressed ; but he related but part of his story, not mentioning the adventure of the unknown knight, in order to procure the duchess an agreeable surprise for the next day. In spite of the fatigue of the day, the boy slept but little, for the recollection of the stranger, the desire he had to see him by day-light, and to receive his present, kept him awake almost the whole night. The next morning Barmecide, after having demanded a safeconduct, arrived at the castle at ten o'clock ; he immediately repaired to Oliver's chamber, and found the knight lying upon a couch, and conversing with Isambard. Barmecide related to them, that Gerold's horse having been killed in the defeat of the preceding day, he had given him his own ; that he had afterwards taken one of his squire's horses in haste, but that unfortunately the

animal was wounded, and unable to follow Gerold ; that he had however, under favour of the night, eluded the pursuit of the conquerors, by taking another road ; that finding himself alone in a meadow, he endeavoured to leap the ditch in order to gain the forest ; that his harassed and wounded horse had fallen and broken a leg, and then died, after rolling upon him in the ditch. Barmecide added, that being almost smothered under his weight and the weight of his own armour, and violently stunned by the fall, he had lain senseless on the ground ; and he finished his recital by relating in what manner he owed his life to young Mirva. Oliver listened to these particulars with equal tenderness and surprise ; he informed Barmecide, that Mirva was the same child whom they had found in the prisons of Rotbold's castle ; Barmecide had then only a glimpse of him, and neither having seen Mirva since, nor heard Ordalia's story, he had not been able to retain any remembrance of this child. Oliver requested Isambard to inform the duchess of the motive which brought Barmecide to the castle ; a moment after, Beatrice and Axiana entered the room, accompanied by Isambard, Roger, Angilbert, Lancelot, and Zemni. The duchess asked an explanation of what she had been confusedly hearing, and after having heard Barmecide with the tenderest emotion, she immediately sent in quest of Mirva, who quickly made his appearance. Barmecide rushing towards him, snatched him to his arms, and, struck with his beauty, looked at him for some minutes with inexpressible tenderness. At last, feeling his tears trickle in spite of him down his cheeks, he placed the child near the duchess. "Pardon, madam," said he, "pardon a weakness I am unable to overcome.—Alas ! I was once a father—had he lived, my son would have been just that age ; he indeed might not have had the reason and the forward

ward virtues of this incomparable boy ; but it is likely, that the child of Abassa would have had his charming mien : tell me if I am mistaken ?—Do not you observe in Mirva's countenance some likeness to Abassa ?”—Every one answered this question in a different way, and Barmecide, approaching the child, at length told him, that he was the unknown knight to whom he was indebted for his life. Mirva, transported at these words, threw himself into his arms. “ I have brought back your horse,” returned Barmecide, “ and, according to my promise, I bring you a piece of my armour ; here it is.” On saying this, he gave him a pair of golden spurs. “ Receive,” said he, “ the honourable mark of chivalry*, which in a few years I am sure you will have a right to wear, and receive likewise this chain of precious stones, which my wife, who loves you without having seen you, has charged me to present besides.” Mirva, quite enraptured, embraced the knight a thousand times over, and then ran to present the duchess with the gifts he had received, which he only desired in order to present to her. “ I imagine,” said Beatrice, “ that no knight will take it amiss, if I allow Mirva the honour of wearing these spurs for a whole day.”—Every one applauded the idea, and Beatrice instantly taking the happy Mirva upon her lap, and putting on the spurs, “ Dear child,” said she, “ remember it is to humanity that thou owest this glorious distinction ; and when in future thou shalt wear these spurs in battle, let them recall to thy mind this action of thy childhood, and the virtues of the generous Barmecide.” At this name, which he had not yet heard pronounced, Mirva started. “ Barmecide,” returned he, “ what is that the great Barmecide.”—“ Yes,” replied the duchess, “ it is he himself ; but who ever spoke to you about him ?”—“ No one in this castle, but the first name I ever heard uttered was that of Barmecide.”

* The knights alone were allowed to wear golden spurs.

cide."—"And in what country?"—"In my own, the name of which I forget, for I was, I believe, but five years old when I left it." During this short dialogue, Barmecide, trembling and beside himself, had changed colour twenty times. "Ah, madam," said he to the duchess, "deign to have compassion upon my folly—an absolute folly, I confess;—but in the name of heaven give me leave to ask the child some questions. Mirva," continued he, "do you recollect whether the country of which you speak be near this place?"—"O, I know it lies a great way off—a great way."—"And why did you leave it?"—I know not. I remember only that I had a good uncle, whom I saw going away, and I have not forgotten his name, because I repeated it a long while afterwards to my father; for I was always thinking of it."—"And what was the name of this uncle?"—"His name was Nasuf."—At this time a general cry was raised in the chamber, and Barmecide, lost in amazement, asked permission of the princess to take off Mirva's coat, in order to look for the happy token which would remove every doubt. The shoulder of the child was instantly uncovered, and the impression of the little olive wreath was clearly distinguished upon it. At the sight of this, Barmecide, no longer able to support the excess of his happiness, cried out, "O, my child!" and fainted away in the arms of Isambard. I shall not take upon me to describe the moving picture of Barmecide, surrounded by his friends, recovering his senses, and seeing his weeping child at his feet kissing his unnerved hands, and pressing his knees to his bosom.

I am qualified indeed to paint terror and despair; frightful experience has familiarised me with all the keenest sensations of pain! But long since a stranger to joy, how should I be able to express its movements?—O thou, whom absence, whom our common misfortune, and thy dangers, render, were it possible,

ble, still dearer to my heart ! O, my daughter ! when justice shall have revoked the cruel decree which separates us, when I shall have pressed thee in my arms, I shall no longer envy the lot of Barmecide ; and then I may paint, with all the truth of nature, both his happiness, and the transports of a mother who recovers the dearest of children, and one the most deserving of maternal affection.

CHAPTER XXVII.

VENGEANCE.

Hommes, ou démons, qui que vous soyez, oserez-vous justifier les attentats contre mon independance par le droit du plus fort ?

Etre superbe et dédaigneux, qui méconnois tes frères, ne verras-tu jamais que ce mépris réjaillit sur toi ? Ah ! si tu veux que ton orgueil soit noble, aies assez d'élévation pour le placer dans tes rapports nécessaires avec ses malheureux, que tu avilis. Un père commun, une ame immortelle, une félicité future, voilà ta véritable gloire, voilà aussi la leur.

L'Abbé RAYNAL.

IN the midst of the most affecting and tumultuous scene which nature is capable of producing, the happy Barmecide was heard several times to pronounce the names of Abaffa and Nasuf. He wrote to Gerold to inform him of his happiness : and Zemni was charged with the double commission of carrying the letter, and conducting Abaffa and Nasuf to the castle.

But Mirva, notwithstanding the joy of having recovered his father, expressed some uneasiness respecting his adoptive parents. "I belong to them like-wife,"

wife," said he ; " Diaulas has saved my life. Without him, my dear father, and even without Oliver, you never would have seen your son!"—" Come, don't distress thyself," cried Barmecide, embracing him ; " should I be a father if I did not share thy gratitude towards thy benefactors ? Yes, thou shalt still be the son of Diaulas and Ordalia ; I will myself conduct thee to their arms ; I will go and press against my heart the beneficent hand which disarmed the monsters that were ready to devour thee. In a word, be assured I shall ever consult thy adoptive father and the generous Oliver in every thing that concerns thee ; and shall never act but in concert with them." Mirva replied by the tenderest caresses ; for this assurance rendered him perfectly happy. The duchess made him relate all that he knew of his own story. He told her, that the man, to whose care Nasuf had delivered him, called himself his father ; that he took him with him upon a journey ; that he died almost suddenly at a paltry inn ; that the people of the house drove away the unfortunate Mirva ; that he wandered about the woods, finding no hospitality but among cottages ; that at last a man who was going into Saxony took charge of him, and brought him to Eresbourg ; that there he was sold to the priests of the temple of Irminsul ; that he remained there more than a year, was well treated, and little imagined himself to be one of the victims, of whom they only took care, to have them to immolate in times of public calamity.

In spite of the inexpressible pleasure of hearing Mirva, of looking at him, and holding him upon his knee, Barmecide counted every minute with extreme impatience, till the arrival of Abaffa and Nasuf. At length they came ; and Abaffa experienced the dearest and purest delight which the human heart is capable of feeling. At the sight of Mirva, Nasuf received the complete reward of his heroic attachment

and

and his virtues ; and Barmecide, surrounded by his friends, taking successively to his arms his happy wife, his son, and Nasuf, was convinced at last, that the splendours of greatness, and even of glory, are but vain chimeras, when compared to the delicious enjoyments of friendship, of gratitude, and of nature. Nasuf informed him, that, dreading the intended journey of Barmecide to Mecca would excite the suspicions of the caliph, he had determined to employ the cruel artifice which was so necessary to the safety both of the child and its father, to which, in fact, Mirva owed his life. Nasuf, alarmed even at his residence in Asia, sent him into Europe under the care of a man on whom he could depend. He received accounts of him during the space of two years ; after which time he heard no more of him. He imagined Mirva was dead, and therefore restrained from making any mention of these circumstances.

As a suspension of arms had been agreed upon, which seemed to be the prelude to a treaty of peace, Barmecide remained two days at the castle, and spent the greater part of the time in Oliver's apartment. The latter, more agitated than ever, stood in need of something to divert his attention ; and this he found in the happiness and friendship of Barmecide. Tormented by bitter regret and unavailing remorse, he had not been able to taste a moment's quiet since the day on which the duchess had discovered his sentiments ; and although chance had betrayed the secret, yet he considered with sorrow, that had it not been for his weakness and imprudence, Beatrice would have never known it. The princess, now conscious of being beloved, had regained her sweet and interesting gaiety, and all the enchanting graces of her mind. In vain was it that Oliver imposed upon himself the most rigorous silence. Beatrice, assured of the possession of his heart,

heart, seemed ever satisfied with him : this she was continually showing in a thousand different ways, and always with equal sensibility and delicacy. Each day seemed to refine the passion of Oliver ; he loved her with all the violence of which his ardent soul could be susceptible ; and often would he enjoy, in spite of himself, the idea that she was conscious of his flame. The soft satisfaction she manifested in that regard rendered her still more interesting in his estimation ; but quickly recollecting his misfortunes, his crime, his vows, and, above all, his friend, he became terrified at his situation, and shuddered when he cast his eyes on the future. Murderer of an innocent wife, he was deeply sensible that a new marriage, on that sole account, was a crime which nothing would justify. That guilty project, therefore, never came into his mind ; but in what manner was it incumbent upon him to act ? Was it possible that Beatrice, who was now acquainted with his sentiments, could consent to make choice of Isambard for a husband ? And even in that chimerical supposition, could he still venture to flatter himself, that he could have generosity enough to remain at the court, a tranquil spectator of the happiness of his friend ? No, surely, in that respect he could not deceive himself ; he was sensible that he should then be compelled to have recourse to eternal exile, to separate himself for ever from Isambard and from Beatrice, and thus at the same time to lose the sole objects of his affection. He was desirous then that Beatrice should remain free, but in such case, Isambard would be unhappy, and it would besides be necessary to quit the duchess ; it would be necessary to tear himself from her in spite of her sorrow, her love, and her despair, and to leave her with the distracting consciousness, that she would perhaps never recover her happiness, or even her peace of mind. Thus in every point of view did Oliver foresee a frightful destiny for himself,

self, his friend, and the duchess. He was likewise aware, that Beatrice, being certain of his love, would find the greater difficulty in conquering an unhappy passion. He saw that her heart had again given reception to hope; and though his resolutions were not to be shaken, he could not conceive how he should be able to remove entirely the illusions which were so necessary to her happiness. He had for a long while flattered himself, that at least there might yet be a happy and brilliant destiny in store for Isambard, who in the course of time might share the sentiments of the amiable Axiana; but this hope was now vanished; for he observed, that the princess had at last opened her eyes upon Isambard's passion for Beatrice, and that ever since that discovery, she used her earnest endeavours to subdue an inclination which reason no longer approved.

Barmecide being now obliged to return to the camp of the allies, repaired to Oliver's chamber an hour before he left the castle. "I have brought you," said he, "a writing which will interest you. The very evening in which Providence had restored us to our child, Nasuf told me, that it was absolutely necessary, that the caliph Aaron should be informed of this unlooked-for happiness. Nasuf has, in fact, written to the caliph, and has shown me his letter, which I have passed a part of the night in translating, in order to procure you the perusal of it.

NASUF to the Caliph AARON AL RASCHID.

"Recognise these characters, which never offered to thine eyes but the vile assurance of an idolatrous respect and a blind submission. It was a slave who then expressed himself; thou art now going to hear the language of a free man. It is not by having taken my flight; it is not in abandoning my country, that I have recovered the rights which nature had given

given me ; virtue alone can efface the stains of slavery. Yes, in thy very palace, under the apparent abjection of thy horrid favour, I knew how to be free ; I despised thee, and I saved Barmecide. Yes, tyrant, Barmecide is alive : united for ever with his wife, and his son, his happiness is my work. I envy not thy bloody exploits, thy fatal conquests, and the throne which thou dishonourest ; and even before I hated thee, my soul, elevated above thine, knew how to prefer Barmecide to thee. Loaded with fetters, I bowed before thee, but my independent heart was possessed by him : the tyrant obtained a vain homage only ; the true worship belonged to the hero. Darest thou to accuse me of ingratitude ? Ah, cruel man ! I was in thy eyes nothing more than a vile instrument, formed to answer thy mad purposes. In the madness of thy boundless pride, thou imaginedst to acquire by dint of largesses the dreadful right of enslaving my soul, of stifling in it all sentiments of justice, compassion, and humanity ; in a word, to corrupt and violate it at the pleasure of thy caprice and passions.—It was thus that thou commandedst me to murder Barmecide—thus it was, that in order to save innocence, I did not hesitate to declare myself thy accomplice. From thy hand I received the dagger which was intended to immolate the benefactor of the East ; in all the stupid confidence of ferocity, thou sawest me depart from thy presence.—I returned before thee pale and bloody ; thou imaginedst thou sawest the blood of Barmecide upon my garments ; thou contemplatedst it with eager avidity. Barbarian ! it was my own ; but this generous blood was no longer the blood of a slave ; I had the resolution to spill it myself, to elude thy fury. The large wound, which opened again in thy presence, (and never in battle had I received a wound so glorious) I had inflicted myself with the weapon thou gavest me for a guilty purpose. I am aware that some traces of greatness

greatness still remain in thy corrupted heart, and my hatred is gratified at it ; thy most intolerable punishment shall be, to be forced to admire in secret the virtue of a slave, to feel, in spite of thy pride, that the soul of Nasuf is superior to thy own. Is it nothing to have encountered so many perils, to have exposed myself so often to thy implacable vengeance ? I have braved ignominy. I bore for two years the execration of the public, and, what thou canst not conceive, I suffered it with serenity. Acknowledge then that a nobler and more powerful spring of action exists than the love of glory ; learn that there are sublime sacrifices, which Virtue alone can make, and of which she is at once both the motive and the recompence. Thou, who hast never acted but to obtain the applause of men, what is now thy refuge ? In spite of the flatterers who surround thee, thou canst not deceive thyself respecting the horror of thy crime ; I have been witness to thy terrible remorse ; I have seen thee weep at thy fame ; but thou thinkest to have yet preserved some pretensions to public admiration, and this hope is but vain illusion. It is principally in justice and goodness, that the personal glory of sovereigns consists : whatever otherwise illustrates their reign, is less their own work than that of their ministers, their generals, and their soldiers. Barmecide was during six years the tutelar divinity of thy empire. The people, the impartial judges of those who govern them, knew thy failings and thy vices ; in the caliph, however, they respected the benefactor of a hero, in him they cherished the friend of Barmecide. But to the grand vizier alone they attributed those admirable establishments of beneficence and generosity, which were made under thy name ; and posterity will confirm the equitable judgment of love and gratitude. And now, since Barmecide has disappeared, what is become of this flourishing empire ? The oppressed people feel the heavy chains of despotism

tism gall them afresh, while an able hand could have lightened, without breaking them. Fallen from thy artificial grandeur, equally defective in genius and in virtue, the object of hatred and contempt, thou canst no longer reign but through fear. And in this shameful degradation, thou still thinkest thyself formed to domineer over mankind. The vile prejudices of stupid pride still persuade thee, that the supreme Being has created the nations of Asia with immortal souls, with inclinations and passions, and the power of choosing between virtue and vice, only to subject them to thy yoke ; to render them more submissive to thy will than the savage beasts, the free inhabitants of the vast forests of thy empire. For fear can never intimidate, nor sentiment seduce them ; they preserve in all its energy the noble instinct of independence, and thou canst not bend them to slavery. And while nature only allows thee to usurp a weak and momentary authority over them, an authority founded upon address and cunning, and not upon power, thou canst think she has given thee the right to bring thy fellow-creatures into bondage ! In order to feel all the absurdity of this horrid blasphemy, recollect thy own weaknesses, and the crimes which stain thy life, and recollect also the conduct of thy slave Nasuf. Compare our sentiments, our characters, and above all, our actions, and then judge if heaven have formed thee to command, and me to obey."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE VOW.

*J'aime assez mon amant, pour renoncer à lui.**Bajazet de RACINE.*

— e le preghiere
 Mosse dalla speranza in dio sicura
 S'alzar volando alle celesti sfere,
 Come va foco al ciel per sua natura.

TASSO.

THE negotiations for peace were broken up some days after the departure of Barmecide ; hostilities again commenced, and lasted near three weeks, without any decisive advantage to either side. In the mean while Oliver, now perfectly cured of his wound, had a particular conference with the other French knights upon the operations of the war, and he communicated to them a plan of attack which he himself had invented. The plan was as bold as it was well combined, and his countrymen easily gave into it ; for the French in all ages have been distinguished for a brilliant temerity of courage and a happy presentiment of victory. The other generals at first opposed the measure, but after long debate the plan was at length adopted. When the duchess was informed of the decision, she gave herself up to all the disquietude, which an enterprise of such temerity and danger was calculated to create. She reflected with equal dread and pain, that Oliver, having conceived the idea of it, was in some respect answerable for the event, and that he would brave every thing, and expose himself to danger with more than ordinary boldness, to ensure its success. On the following morning, a little before day-break, it was agreed to attack the princes in their own camp, and this was accordingly executed.

After

After an obstinate battle, the army of Beatrice forced the first entrenchments of the enemy; but soon being checked by the valour and ability of the count of Bavaria, was obliged to have recourse to a second battle. Victory for a while remained undecided; Gerold, remarking that the troops commanded by the duke of Friuli began to fall into disorder, sent Barmecide to that quarter; at the same moment Oliver advanced up to the count of Bavaria, and assailed him with impetuosity. The count was pressed so close, that he could neither manage his horse, which began to prance and rear, nor make any use of his lance. Oliver seized the bridle of the horse: the count instantly spurred him on with great violence; the beast took a prodigious leap, and Gerold, at the same time endeavouring to strike his adversary with his sword, himself received a very dangerous wound. Oliver, for the second time, rushed upon his foe, driving away and overturning all he found before him. Gerold, no longer able to defend himself was disarmed, and taken prisoner by the Knight of the Swan. At the same instant, too, a party of Gerold's troops laid down their arms, and yielded themselves up to the conqueror. The rest took their flight. The rout became general on the part of the enemy; the duke of Friuli was slain by Isambard. The camp was forced, a prodigious number of prisoners were taken, and the battle proved decisive. Oliver was feelingly alive to the glory and good fortune of this memorable day. To him was owing the plan of attack and the overthrow of the count of Bavaria. The whole army instantly and unanimously decreed him the honours of triumph; Isambard hastened to bear the happy news of victory to the duchess; arriving before the rest, he suddenly appeared before her. Beatrice at seeing him endeavoured to rise; but, ready to faint, she sunk down again upon her seat, pronouncing with feeble voice the name of Oliver. "Madam,"

said

said Isambard, "you will soon see Oliver, he is safe, his genius and valour have terminated the war; he brings you the count of Bavaria, whom he has taken prisoner; you have now no more enemies, and it is Oliver who has delivered you from them. The army has proclaimed him the hero of the day; you are going to see him appear crowned by his very rivals; but be persuaded these are not in his eyes his real triumph; that triumph his great soul can find only here." "Dear and generous Isambard," cried Beatrice, shedding a torrent of tears. On saying this she held out her arms to him; the tender Isambard knelt with one knee on the ground, and Beatrice leaning towards him, pressed her cheek against his. This favour, which she had never before granted, was only a fresh avowal of her tenderness for Oliver. Of this Isambard was but too conscious; but the adored face of Beatrice touched his own; he felt her tears fall down his cheeks; he ventured to press her hands against his heart; he experienced a delicious sensation, though not unmixed with pain; he lamented his very happiness; in a word, both happy and jealous, he envied and blessed his rival. Shortly the noise of warlike instruments announced the return of the conquerors, and Beatrice went forth to receive them. The modest Oliver, confounded in the crowd, marched in silence behind Axiana, Thederic, and the French troops, giving his arm to the count of Bavaria, who was supported on the other hand by Barmecide; for the latter, upon the retreat of the conquering army, had given himself up prisoner in order to partake the fate of his friend. The duchess, notwithstanding her joy and happiness, could not refrain from weeping on seeing Gerold in the melancholy condition into which fortune had thrown him; she felt how much this amiable and illustrious prince must suffer in appearing before her in this humiliating and sorrowful situation. Full of this idea, Beatrice advanced

advanced towards the count, to say all that the most tender and delicate generosity could prompt. Gerold listened to her with chastened looks, and replied with nobleness and simplicity. The duchess conducted him into one of the pavilions of the castle: she then called her surgeons, who, examining his wounds, judged them not to be extremely dangerous. Beatrice prohibited all kind of rejoicing and tumultuous festivity in the palace; but she passed the rest of the day with the knights, who were assembled together. Oliver sat out of the circle; yet Beatrice often met his looks, and, not being able to converse with him, she seemed to be wholly taken up during the evening with Isambard; for she was so much pleased with him for having announced the events which made her so happy, and his presence revived so agreeable a recollection, that she experienced a grateful sensation every time she cast her eyes upon him, or even heard the sound of his voice.

The next day the surgeon took off the first dressings which they had applied to Gerold's wounds, and after having probed them, they declared to Barmecide that they were mortal. The inconsolable Barmecide would no more quit his unhappy friend, and passed all his days and nights by his bed-side. On the evening of the third day the count fell gradually into a kind of lethargy. Barmecide, who had been sending all the attendants, one after the other, for medical assistance, was now all alone with him. Seeing him without motion, and no longer hearing him breathe, he thought him dead; and, distracted with grief, he left the chamber in the wildest manner to hasten and procure the succour which he himself considered as unavailing. A few steps from the door he met Delia, who had not been seen for four days past, because she had passed all that time secluded in her own apartment. Barmecide, too deeply engrossed by sorrow to be struck with the singularity of this meeting,

ing, passed on one side without speaking to her; but, hearing his groans, she stopped him, saying, "What, is he worse then?" "Ah madam," cried Barmecide, "the unfortunate count of Bavaria is no more!" On uttering these words, he precipitately withdrew, and Delia rushed into Gerold's apartment. She approached his bed-side, and remained a moment motionless, surveying the sad object which presented itself to her view. Gerold's face was turned towards her, his eyes appeared to be shut for ever, the palleness of death was spread over his brow, one of his arms was extended on the bed.—Delia, still standing by him, surveyed him without shedding tears. Despair dried up their source. "Unfortunate man!" said she, "at last thou art delivered from the dreadful punishment of loving without hope! I ought to envy, and not lament thee!—But at least I am sure of not surviving thee."—On saying this, she leant towards the bed with a gloomy look and wild demeanour, and caught hold of Gerold's hand; she was astonished to find it still warm. A feeble gleam of hope made her start and shudder; less weaned from life, she became now more sensible to grief, and her tears began to flow.—With trembling hand she felt the pulse of Gerold, and imagined she discovered a languid motion. She fell upon her knees, and pouring forth a flood of tears, "O God," cried she, "deign to restore him to life, and I vow to consecrate mine to thy service. Let him live, and I will henceforth live but for thee! In this terrible moment, it is love which still dares to implore thee, but love which immolates itself!"—Scarce had she pronounced these words when Gerold was heard to sigh. "Great God," cried she, with transport, "I renew the sacred vow!"—At those words she arose and looked at Gerold. His eyes were still closed; Delia leant towards him: "Receive," said she, "this eternal adieu—this last kiss!"—Thus speaking, she applied her lips to

his; at this instant Gerold suddenly opened his eyes; Delia gave a loud shriek, and disappeared as quick as lightning. The count, who had not perfectly recovered his senses, had but an indistinct idea of this tender embrace; he had only a confused glimpse of a woman with dishevelled hair, making a precipitate retreat; but the idea of this scene was strongly impressed on his memory.

In the mean while Barmecide returned with the physicians, and his joy was equal to his surprise on finding the count revived, and half raised up, leaning upon one hand, and with the other holding back the curtain, while he was looking steadfastly towards the door; for he was still gazing after the object which had just disappeared. Having, however, no distinct idea, he was unable to give any account of what had disturbed him. The physicians, after having examined Gerold, found him much better; and on the next morning they declared him out of danger. His youth, and the strength of his constitution, contributed rapidly to his recovery, and in the course of five or six days he was well enough to leave his bed. One evening, being alone with Barmecide, "I must relate to you," said he, "a dream I had during my illness, which still dwells on my mind, and the remembrance of which, far from weakening, becomes every day more powerful in proportion as my ideas grow clearer. On recovering from that deep lethargy which gave you so much alarm, it seemed to me as if I were in the arms of an angelic figure, whose pure and divine truth, like that of the Creator, called me again to existence, and restored me my soul. I had only a glimpse of this celestial being; when I strove to look at it, it vanished in the air, and I saw only its white garments, and its long and waving locks. It had the elegant and slender form of a woman; in such form surely angels appear!—I know all this is only a vision, a kind of delirium brought on by the fever,

fever, but you have no idea how forcibly it has struck me." "Ah, seignior," replied Barmecide much affected, "what you call an illusion is not one; it was the unfortunate Delia that you saw." "Delia," cried Gerold, "what, that Delia?"—He said no more. "Yes, seignior," returned Barmecide, "the young and beauteous Delia, who, as I had suspected, cherishing in secret a romantic passion for you, is now the victim of it. She came here, saw you on the verge of the grave, implored heaven for you with the double fervour of innocence and love, and promised the Supreme Being, if he restored you to health, to shut herself up for ever in a cloister. On leaving your chamber, she ran to Beatrice, and remained alone with her more than three hours. The next day, the duchess in great affliction accompanied her to a house which she has now given her. This mansion will be immediately transformed into a monastery. Workmen are employed day and night, the grates are already fixed up. A party of nuns are arrived from a neighbouring convent in order to form a sisterhood for the new cloister, which the duchess is founding for her young friend; for, not being able to change her resolution, Beatrice at least is determined that Delia shall be in her neighbourhood. The priests are ordered to attend, every thing is prepared in haste for this sad ceremony: in fine, Delia will make this cruel sacrifice without further delay, in a week she will take the veil. This event has spread a gloom over all the castle; Lancelot, especially, who is passionately fond of Delia, is inconsolable. Every one, I must confess, is of opinion, that you ought to do every thing to snatch Delia from her cloister, because she cannot pronounce an irrevocable vow before the expiration of a year; and as you have, in fact, no farther prospect of becoming the husband of Beatrice, you must allow, did you but know Delia, that, after the duchess of Cleves, there does not exist an object

more worthy of touching and fixing a heart like yours, than herself." During this discourse Gerold was struck with so much astonishment, that Barmecide might have continued speaking much longer without his having any desire to interrupt him. The reader must recollect the count's adventure with Armolede, and how the latter, taking advantage of his mistake, had made herself pass for Delia; through this imposture the count, being persuaded that Delia was the most unworthy of her sex, could not conceive the elevation of sentiment attributed to her, or the real sacrifice which resulted from it. Forced, however, to believe these positive facts, he imagined this young person, in spite of the depravation of her manners, had conceived a violent passion for him; but he was at a loss to reconcile the mixture of love and piety which Barmecide had described, with the irregularity of her conduct, of which he had seen positive proofs. He was lost in his reflections; touched, however, in spite of himself, with the splendid sacrifice of which he was the object, he considered it his duty to respect the reputation of a lady, whom repentance perhaps, as well as love, had driven to a cloister, and did not disclose a word which could give Barmecide the least suspicion of the opinion he entertained of Delia.

One person only in the palace (Oger the Dane) was able to clear up the count of Bavaria's mistake relative to the interesting Delia; but being confined to his bed for some days past on account of having neglected a slight wound he had received in the late battle, he was seriously indisposed, and not in a situation to converse with his friends, or to take any part in the transactions of the castle. Every thing therefore concurred to prolong the mistake of Gerold.

The day on which Delia was to take the veil being arrived, Barmecide found means of executing a plan he had premeditated. Interesting himself greatly in

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the fate of Delia, he was secretly afflicted at the count's insensibility ; and this kind of hardheartedness he attributed to his passion for the duchess. But at the same time he was persuaded that the youth of Delia, and her enchanting beauty, would make the deepest impression upon him ; especially should he see her unexpectedly, and in some striking point of view. The count had been able to go out for two days past, and Barmecide constantly accompanied him on his walks. It was no difficult matter to lead him to Delia's convent without his having the least idea of it ; for Gerold supposed the house was at a considerable distance, because he was acquainted with none but that inhabited by Armoſlede. On entering the wood, the count perceived several horses tied to the trees, with the squires who were taking care of them. "Where can the knights be," said he, "to whom these horses belong?"—"In that house," answered Barmecide, pointing to the new monastery ; "let us go in," continued he, "we shall see what could have brought together so many persons upon this spot." Upon this he advanced towards the house, Gerold followed him ; Barmecide, who, in concert with the duchess, had planned every thing beforehand, entered with the count. They went across a gallery which led to the chapel ; advancing a few paces, Barmecide opened a little door ; Gerold passed through it with his friend, and found himself in a grated closet, which communicated with the chapel. The astonished count beheld the knights and ladies of the court of Beatrice in the chapel before him. He could not himself be seen, but he clearly distinguished all the objects about him ; and what struck him most, was a large grate which was directly facing him, and which took up the whole width of the church ; a black veil was drawn behind the grate. "Ah, Barmecide," exclaimed the count, "whither have you brought me?"—"Pardon me, seignior," returned Barmecide,

Barmecide, "I was desirous you should see the innocent victim who has devoted herself for your sake." Gerold was going to reply, when a signal, made in the nuns choir, gave notice that the ceremony was going to begin.

The black curtain, however, still remained behind the grate; in a few moments an enchanting voice was heard, which sung a hymn.—The touching strains of that voice made Gerold start, and Barmecide, observing his emotion, said: "I know that, according to custom, it is the novice who must sing at the present instant; but I am as much surprised as yourself at the wonderful sweetness of that voice, for Delia never pretended to possess that enchanting talent, and no one has ever heard her sing."—"Just heaven!" interrupted Gerold, "what recollection does that voice revive!—Are you certain that is Delia's voice?" As he spoke these words the curtain was drawn aside, and the charming Delia, dressed in the utmost magnificence, advanced slowly towards the grate where Beatrice, all in tears, was waiting for her to give her the holy veil. Her youth, her beauty, the touching expression of her countenance, the nobleness and modesty of her mien, imparted such a value to the sacrifice she was going to make, that no one who beheld her could refrain from tears; the church resounded with one universal moan.—This expression of public concern filled up the measure of Gerold's uneasiness; he could only perceive the shape and part of the dress of Delia. The priest, who attended her, being placed between the grated closet and herself, entirely hid her face; but when she was near the grate the priest withdrew a few paces; Delia advanced alone, and the count, having a full view of her, arose with transport, crying out, "Great God! it is she! it is Maria!" On uttering these words, he sunk down upon his seat, and fainted away. It was in reality the unhappy and tender-hearted Maria, who had

had taken refuge with her rival in hopes of interesting and rendering herself agreeable to her, and with a view of being serviceable to Gerold. At the first private interview she had with the duchess, she had fallen at her feet and exclaimed, *I am culpable and unhappy!* Beatrice wanted nothing more, she received her in her arms, asked her no questions, and, after having had an opportunity of studying her disposition, conceived the tenderest friendship for her. Maria had recourse to no other fiction than assuming a borrowed name, and pretending to be born in the dominions of Gerold, the better to account for the attachment she willingly confessed she had for him. Every day she had some interesting particular to relate to the duchess concerning this prince; she had an inexhaustible collection of generous and beneficent actions which he performed; she introduced such grace and sentiment into these recitals, that had it not been for the arrival of Oliver, they would perhaps, in the course of time, have made some impression upon the heart of Beatrice. In this manner did Maria conduct herself till the moment in which the count was taken prisoner; then, trembling for his recovery, she threw aside all dissimulation. On leaving his chamber she repaired to the duchess, and throwing herself at her feet, declared her real name, made a sincere confession of her fault and misfortune, and related the vow she had just been making, of shutting up herself for ever in a cloister. The duchess in vain endeavoured to persuade her to change her resolution, Maria was unmoveable; the enthusiasm of her love and her piety persuaded her that the life of Gerold was attached to the accomplishment of this cruel sacrifice. Thus was Beatrice obliged to give way to her pressing entreaties, secretly flattering herself, however, that Gerold, touched at this devotedness, would be able to find means of overcoming her scruples, and of tearing

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her from the monastery before she had pronounced her last vows.

In the mean while Gerold, being returned to the palace, and finding himself again alone with Barmecide, explained to him the cause of the extraordinary scene he had just been witness to, and related, without any disguise, the story of the unfortunate Maria. Barmecide had no occasion to incite the mind of this prince to repentance and gratitude. Gerold, finding the tender and generous Maria more beautiful and interesting than ever, transferred, without any struggle, to her the vows which Beatrice had rejected. His heart, deeply touched at such heroic passion, was now alive only to Maria; and honour and inclination alike induced him to strive to soften her. He immediately wrote the most passionate epistle, and Barmecide undertook to deliver it. The letter was received with equal sensibility and emotion. Maria read it over several times, bathing it with her tears; she promised to keep it as long as she lived; but fixed in her resolution, she repeated over and over, "It was for him I made this vow; and how shall I be unfaithful to it?" In vain did Barmecide entreat her to grant his friend a moment's interview; she positively refused to see him. "Go, seignior," continued she, "tell him that heaven, which is always equitable, cannot allow of the union of Gerold and Maria, but the guilty Maria feels herself happy to make this sacrifice, and to hear of his regret." On saying this, she arose and left Barmecide. Gerold was excessively grieved on hearing the sad result of this interview; he made many other attempts, which were not attended with better success. Maria, encouraged by the counsels of friendship, still resolutely persisted in her intentions. The virtuous Amalberga, long since determined to quit the world, shut herself up in Maria's cloister, and likewise took the veil; and Maria, encouraged by her example, expiated her first failing by thus making

making resistance to all the seduction of love ; a seduction which was now become more dangerous than ever, because the passion was mutual.

Since I quitted my native land, I have made an excursion through the fine country of Cleves ; I was then alone, and a persecuted fugitive. I visited the monastery which still bears the name of its interesting founder. On contemplating this venerable and antique edifice, surrounded by a majestic forest, I recollect with compassion the misfortunes and the sacrifice of Maria ; but quickly the sorrowful reflection of myself, and my own situation, compelled me to envy her fate, and I ceased to lament her, considering that at least, in this deep solitude, she had found peace, an asylum, and a friend *.

CHAPTER XXIX.

P E A C E .

La paix, seigneur, il faut lui tout sacrifier,
C'est le fruit précieux qui nait d'un vain laurier.
Qu'elle suive toujours le char de la victoire,
Quand le vainqueur est homme, et digne de sa gloire.

DU BELLOY.

AS soon as the count of Bavaria's health was perfectly restored, the duchess calling all her defenders in council, they assembled in a spacious hall to discuss the terms of peace which she should propose to her vanquished enemies. The king of Pannonia and the duke of Benevento spoke first, and maintained that

* At a little distance from the castle of Cleves lies a great convent of nuns. It is situated in the midst of a forest, and is called *Maria in Baum*; that is, *Mary in the Wood*.

the duchess, now having it in her power to give the law, ought to avail herself of this favourable occasion of aggrandizing her dominions by requiring many cessions, and among others that of the country bordering on the duchy of Cleves, which belonged to the count of Bavaria. Axiana then began to speak ; and combated this spirit of conquest by enlarging upon the duties of justice and moderation ; but several knights seconded the opinions of Theudon and Grimaldo, and pretended, that the peace would not prove lasting, if the duchess did not deprive her enemies of the greater part of their power. Itambard with great eloquence refuted all the reasoning of this odious and too prevalent policy ; after speaking largely upon the subject, " Finally," said he, " I maintain, that the sole mean of rendering peace lasting and truly glorious is, to extirpate all the roots of hatred, to suppress all resentments, and to afford the example of generous moderation in prosperity (34)." This discourse was warmly applauded by all the French ; for their first movement was always to admire generosity, and to cherish with enthusiasm the noble sentiments it inspires. Theobald and Oger the Dane were of the same way of thinking : but Roger annexed a new motion to his suffrage. " Sovereigns," said he, " should especially, in their treaties of peace, have regard to the public welfare, and the sacred interests of humanity ; it was thus that Charlemagne, in his treaties with the vanquished Saxons, required no other condition than the abolition of their abominable sacrifices ; the enemies of the duchess of Cleves, born in civilized countries, have, it is true, none of the horrible superstitions of these barbarians, but all these princes are despots, and may become tyrants. It seems to me that it would be worthy of the princes to oblige them to enact wise and beneficent laws, similar to those which secure the happiness of the subjects of Beatrice and Axiana." This idea was applauded by several

several young knights of his own age; but Oliver violently opposed it. "To check proscription and murder," said he, "is, I must allow, the worthiest use that can be made of power, and the happiest consequence of victory; but thanks to heaven, the duchess of Cleves has not these monstrous enormities to repress; all laws, that sound morality does not condemn, are essentially good, if they suit the nation which has adopted them. In the eye of reason, the most perfect institutes, those of the duchy of Cleves, for instance, may have a thousand inconveniences in another country: climate, the habits and manners, the national character, must produce, among different nations, an eternal variety of governments. A people, that would impose its own laws upon other states, would conceive a project at once gigantic and puerile, and display nothing better than extravagant and ridiculous tyranny. In a word, the experience of many ages can alone attest the solidity of human institutions. The duchess of Cleves has herself created every thing in her own dominions. In proposing to the allied princes the constitution which is the work of her own hands, can she say, 'Abolish your usages, annul your laws, and take mine instead?' The form of government I have planned, and which I propose to you, is the best; I have provided for every contingency, I am certain of having attained the utmost degree of human perfection, and I declare that all who are of a contrary opinion are absurd.' What language! Is it possible to suppose the august Beatrice could express herself in a manner so little worthy of her? Would not such sentiments be absurd in the mouth of the first legislator of Europe; of Charlemagne himself? Notwithstanding his age and experience, although he was employed a great number of years upon his capitularies, yet he never considered himself intitled to impose them even on his own nation; he only ventured to offer them, and submit them to general discussion. In

In fine, it is reason, if it is time, and not violence and authority, that can produce useful revolutions; and legislators, who are desirous of propagating their ideas, have only one rational and justifiable way of doing it, which is, to maintain peace and plenty in their dominions, and to render the country superior to all others in wisdom, virtue, and prosperity."

Oliver's discourse was particularly approved by Beatrice. She was pleased with the style of frankness and liberty which pervaded it; she had too much greatness of mind not to despise flattery; and the language of truth in the mouth of Oliver sounded still more welcome in her ear, as it afforded her a new testimony of his esteem. At last she herself spoke, to declare, that after having attentively listened to the different counsels which she had been receiving, she persisted in her intention of offering her enemies peace, and imposing but one sole condition, that of defraying the expenses of the war. The duchess closed her speech with a declaration of her most affectionate thanks to all the knights. "Desiring to eternize," added she, "the memory of my gratitude, I have caused a marble column to be made, upon which are engraved the names of all my defenders. This column will be erected to-morrow at the entrance of the forest; and the following inscription will be read upon it: *The laws of this country guarantee its inhabitants from every kind of oppression.* But henceforward every female stranger, who shall repair to this column, exacting protection and succour, shall find both at the court of Beatrice, whenever she can prove herself to be the object of unjust persecution. Two guards keeping sentinel close by the column shall be authorised to interrogate these unfortunate fugitives. I have thought I could not better do honour to the heroes assembled in the duchy of Gleves for the purpose of defending an oppressed stranger, than by imitating their generosity as far as it lay in my power; and I am of opinion, that

that a column decorated with their illustrious names is well adapted to become the refuge of innocence and misfortune *." Here Beatrice was obliged to stop, to receive, in turn, the thanks of all the knights : afterwards, again addressing the assembly, but with blushing embarrassment, " All my defenders," said she, " are alike illustrious and generous, and entitled to equal gratitude ; I am sensible, that amongst such renowned warriors, their exploits would have been similar, had chance thrown the same advantage in their way. I am sensible too, that when a conqueror is proclaimed out of such a list of heroes, it is the most fortunate who is crowned, and not the most valiant. But since the laws of chivalry have consecrated this custom ; since they, whom fortune has most favoured in battle, receive from the hands of their noble rivals the palm of victory ; no one can be surprised at my offering to the Knights of the Swan a particular homage of gratitude.—The generous Isambard has vanquished the count of Thuringia, the most formidable, Gerold excepted, of all my enemies ; and by the overthrow of the duke of Friuli, he has contributed to the success of the last battle.—What obligations have I not to his brother in arms ?—He has saved my life by exposing his own.—He it is who formed the late plan of attack, and to whom I am indebted for victory. Furthermore, it is he who, by making the count of Bavaria prisoner, has terminated the war.—All the knights who now hear me, have already awarded him the prize of that memorable day. To them it belongs likewise to dispense glory ; their suffrage is the true recompence of a warrior ; I do not pretend to confer any, I am only desirous of fulfilling a duty, by manifesting the sen-

* On passing through the forest of Cleves, I looked for this benevolent column ; but it was no longer to be found ! All I could learn concerning it was, that it had been transported into the country of Holstein, or into Denmark.

sibility with which I ought to be affected. I therefore declare, that, in imitation of the neighbouring princes, I am going to institute in my dominions a particular order of chivalry, of which I shall be myself the head. My subjects alone can be received into it; and I shall grant it, without any regard to birth, to such as shall distinguish themselves, by virtue, courage, and generosity. This new institution shall be called the order of *the Knights of the Swan**. The insignia of the order will for ever recall its origin; the ribband shall be white, and the medal shall represent the emblem and device of Hambard and Oliver." At these words, the Knights of the Swan, much affected, made a low bow. At the same instant, Axiana, Theobald, Oger the Dane, Zemni, and all the French, applauded the measure with enthusiasm; but the other knights kept a gloomy silence, and the expression of discontent and indignation was visible on their countenance. Several murmurs indeed were heard: this ill will, declared in so open a manner, appeared to the duchess an act of extreme injustice; and the resentment she felt dissipated the embarrassment she had hitherto experienced. She arose with a calm and dignified air; "I have fulfilled my duty," said she, "I retire from this august assembly with great satisfaction; to-morrow I shall institute the order of the Knights of the Swan, and I invite all those who wish to attend the ceremony, to meet in this hall at ten o'clock in the morning." On pronouncing these words, the duchess saluted the assembly, and withdrew. Accompanied by Axiana and some other persons, she immediately repaired to the count of Bavaria, whom she found alone. She informed him of her intentions relative to peace, and recommended him to sign the treaty. The count listened to Beatrice with great emotion; and when she had left off speak-

* See Note 15.

ing, "Your generosity, madam," said he, "touches me to the soul, yet does not astonish me; although I ought indeed to expect to give up, by way of ransom, that portion of my dominions which forms the limits of yours. Those countries lying so near the duchy of Cleves have been long in my estimation the most valuable of all my possessions!—I must now exile myself from them for ever! They belong to you, madam, since you may command me to resign them; but you even disdain to make the acquisition. And, at least I shall have the pleasure of disposing of them in a manner that will prove agreeable to you, by conferring them on Barmecide; and I shall consider myself as making a proper return to the friendship of that great man, by establishing him near you." At these words the princess was greatly touched; she replied in terms expressive of what she felt, and Gerold, taking the paper she presented to him, signed the treaty of peace. Then Beatrice, declaring to the count that he was free, requested his friendship, promised him hers, and terminated this conversation, by giving him her hand with that grace and air of frankness which gave such lustre to all her actions. Gerold received that hand with equal emotion and respect; he pressed it between his own, and kissing it, was only able to pronounce these words, *Ab Madam!* —At this moment Barmecide entered the room, and soon after the duchess retired. The count finding himself alone with his friend, informed him of every thing that had just been passing. Barmecide admired the moderation of Beatrice, and the generosity of Gerold; at the same time he positively refused the dominions the prince wished him to accept; but the count, earnestly pressing him, declared, that if he persisted in his refusal, he was resolved to break all the tender ties of friendship which united them together. "At length," continued he, "I have no other expedient in my present condition to retrieve
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my character in the eyes of her whose good opinion will be even dearer to me than the most brilliant renown—in the estimation of her, from whom I am doomed to fly, because I can never see her again with indifference.—Barmecide, take pity on a wretched man!—Allow me the inexpressible happiness of doing an act which will appear generous to Beatrice, and in affording her the society of persons who are dear to her, secures at the same time a happy establishment to my friend, his wife, and her son.—Consider, that I am making no sacrifice to you; ambition has never been my ruling passion, and now it is entirely extinguished in this harassed and distracted heart.—If Maria be propitious to my vows, I may yet recover my happiness; but even in that case I shall not venture to reside upon a spot so near this dangerous abode. The county of Bavaria shall be our asylum; I will live far from Beatrice, and from every object that can recall her to my remembrance.—If Maria should prove inflexible, I have nothing farther to hope or fear.—I shall have resolution enough to punish myself for her misfortune, and my own crime. Being the unhappy object of a terrible and sublime sacrifice, a guilty lover, a still more guilty friend, unable to make reparation for these fatal errors, I shall at least have the courage to expiate them.—Yes, I call heaven to witness, that, if Maria make the irrevocable vow, I will find out the virtuous Meinrad, and bury myself with him in his desert.” At these words, the eyes of Barmecide ran over with tears, and Gerold redoubling his intreaties with new force, Barmecide at last accepted his generous offer. The count then wrote to the duchess to inform her that the affair was finally terminated. He commissioned Barmecide to deliver the note, and without waiting an answer, he immediately left the place.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE CONCLUSION.

O divine amitié, félicité parfaite !
 Seul mouvement de l'âme, où l'excès soit permis,
 Idole d'un cœur juste, et passion du sage,
 Amitié ! que ton nom couronne cet ouvrage.

VOLTAIRE.

THE institution of the order of the Swan, which the duchess had announced, had excited such jealousy among the knights, that on the same day the four sons of duke Aimon, the duke of Benevento, Astolphus the paladin, and some others, took leave of Beatrice, and instantly departed. The king of Pannonia, dissembling his dark resentment, did not follow their example ; he remained, although he was convinced, that the heart of the duchess was at length disposed of ; but he had only discovered a part of the secret, for he imagined her to be in love with Isambard. This mistake was the result of many observations which were naturally calculated to deceive a man of his disposition. He had been aware, that Isambard might have pretended to the glory of consoling the beautiful and illustrious Axiana for the loss of her husband. Yet Isambard, far from endeavouring to secure so brilliant a conquest, had openly declared his passion for the duchess. Theudon could not conceive him to have made such a sacrifice without the certainty of being beloved by Beatrice ; and indeed, from that period especially, he observed him to attract her attentions more remarkably than ever. At the same time he perceived the same intimacy between Isambard and his brother in arms. Thence he concluded, that it was impossible they should be rivals ;

vals ; besides, no one was ignorant that Oliver's melancholy arose from an unhappy passion, over which neither reason nor time could triumph. In fine, Oliver, always keeping by himself, and only manifesting for Beatrice that admiration which no one could refuse her, paid her none of those attentions which either declare or betray a passion. In conversing with her he had neither the assiduity, the earnestness, nor the language, of a lover. From these reflections, Theudon, being entirely persuaded of the mutual passion of Beatrice and Isambard, felt all the hatred and jealousy which his soul was capable of containing. The amiable Axiana was under the like mistake with Theudon ; she also believed that Isambard, being beloved by the duchess, would shortly obtain her hand ; but having been able to change the early passion she had felt for the Knight of the Swan, into friendship, she earnestly wished for his happiness ; and, desirous of being a witness of it, had promised Beatrice not to leave her till after the rejoicings and feasts on account of the peace, which were to last several days. The youthful Roger, who was passionately in love with Axiana, observed with inexpressible joy events which seemed to presage the union of Beatrice and Isambard. Being no longer in dread of so formidable a rival, he cherished those hopes, which, in fact, were eventually realised. Barmecide had declared his intention of conducting the countess back to her dominions. This proof of attachment and respect he considered as her due, who had generously received his fugitive spouse ; Roger solicited with great ardour the permission of adding likewise to the princess's escort, and he flattered himself he should obtain it. The other knights, except the knights of the Swan, were about to return to the court of Charlemagne. Lancelot, quite overcome with grief since the moment in which Maria had made herself known, bemoaned the fate of that interesting victim of seduction and love,

love, and was not in a situation to reflect upon what was passing around him. Angilbert was more calm and more happy, and, notwithstanding his thoughts were turned towards France, observed with interesting curiosity the various scenes to which he was witness, and was desirous of seeing their denouement before his departure. Oger the Dane, restored to reason and philosophy, eagerly wished to return to his cottage and to find his Chloe, and he intended taking his leave in a few days. Isambard, full of trouble, love, and incertitude, bereft of hope and undetermined in his designs, waited in silence the result of so many events. He dreaded to ask Oliver any questions ; he could easily discover his sentiments, but could not see into his projects. As for the unhappy Oliver, he found himself in that terrible situation, in which all the movements of the heart are repressed and combated by duty and reason. The events of the day, together with all that had taken place in the council, had so powerful an effect upon him, that, finding himself not in a situation to take any part in a general conversation, and fearful of betraying his feelings, he avoided sitting down to supper on the pretext of a violent headache. Retiring to his chamber, he gave himself up to the most distressing train of reflection. The conduct of the duchess towards her enemies, and her defenders, the character of generosity and greatness of mind which she so eminently supported, and the late proofs he had received of her tenderness, had worked up his passion for her to its highest pitch. Yet he was enchanted without being seduced ; honour and friendship still held the same empire over him ; faithful to his vows, he was now more than ever sensible of the necessity of removing hence, but though he persisted in this design, yet his resolution was accompanied with despair. He considered Beatrice satisfied and happy, indulging the soft illusion, that the object of so much love would never have the courage

courage to break the ties of sentiment and gratitude, and abandon her. He anticipated her astonishment, her affliction, and despair. He shuddered, yet without shrinking from his resolution, "Just heaven," cried he, "into what a gulph has my weakness and imprudence plunged me! I must be then ungrateful and barbarous, in order not to be base and perjured!—Dreadful situation, in which I can neither delude nor conquer myself; in which passion and reason, preserving an equal sway, leave sufficient strength to virtue to intice me on, although she has no longer the power of recompensing me, or of holding out a single consolation!—O Beatrice, in reward of your favours and the ingenuous and affecting proofs of your tenderness, I am going then to bid you an eternal adieu!—At least the sentiments of this distracted heart shall be made known to you. Alas! even in quitting you, I dare not declare them in person. How shall I have the power to tear myself from you, if I once give way to the happiness of telling you what I feel! but you shall find the fond confessions of my heart expressed in a letter which shall be delivered to you after my departure!—O how grateful will it prove to me to declare in that writing the whole extent of my passion! With what rapture will my trembling hand trace every word, every letter!—With what rapidity will the pages of this epistle be filled; and yet the time employed in writing it, will prove the last moment of happiness in reserve for me!"

While the unfortunate Knight of the Swan gave himself up to these painful reflections, Beatrice, whose thoughts, projects, and proceedings, had ever Oliver for their object, informed Zemni, that Theobald consented to his union with his daughter; "to-morrow," added she, "after the ceremony of the institution of the order of the Swan, you may receive the hand of Sylvia; and although I have declared, that none but my own subjects are admissible into this new order, founded

founded by gratitude to your benefactor, and mine, I shall, nevertheless, make an exception in your favour; I can feel the delight you must experience on acquiring the right of bearing the colours and device of Oliver!—Besides, the husband of Sylvia can never be considered a stranger in the duchy of Cleves, and it is my duty to treat the son of Theobald as if he had been born in my own dominions. Go, Zemni, and consult Oliver, I can wish you happiness—'tis he alone who can decide your fate; go and speak to him; you will return this evening, and bring me his answer." At these words, Zemni, overcome with joy and gratitude, ran to Oliver's apartment; he related all that Beatrice had been saying to him; and Oliver was deeply touched at the recital. He felt how greatly the duchess was delighted to lavish her favours upon this young man, whose life he had saved, and who was so dearly and intimately connected with him. But proofs like these of the ingenuous and delicate tenderness of Beatrice, could only serve to aggravate his despair. Dissembling, however, the various sensations with which he was agitated, he replied to Zemni in a calm and satisfied manner; and was desirous of going with him to thank the duchess immediately. But Zemni stopped him, "One moment, seignior," said he, "I intreat you not to make me undertake an engagement which must attach me to the duchy of Cleves, if you yourself be not decided to abide here. My gratitude to you is the first sentiment of my heart, as well as my first duty: my glory depends upon accompanying you, and love and fortune can contribute nothing to my happiness if obliged to separate from you." Oliver made no other reply than tenderly embracing Zemni, and inviting him to attend him to wait upon the duchess. Zemni obeyed with joy, considering this invitation, as a tacit avowal of an intention, which Oliver would not yet openly declare. Of this he was the more easily persuaded, insasmuch as he

he had long perceived the mutual passion of the duchess and Oliver. The two knights found Beatrice in the drawing-room. On seeing them enter, she arose, and, accompanied by Theobald, led them into an adjacent closet. The interview was short, Oliver spoke but little; but in a manner which satisfied Beatrice. On leaving him, she reminded him, that the company met on the morrow at ten o'clock. "That day," added she, "will be one of the brightest of my life. I shall consecrate it wholly to gratitude—to the dearest sentiment of my heart."—Oliver, more confused and distracted than ever, retired in haste. He passed almost the whole night in an agitation which prevented him from going to bed. A deep dejection of mind succeeding however to these violent struggles, he fell by degrees into a kind of dozing, brought on by the exhausted state of his spirits, which, far from restoring them, only completed, as it were, their annihilation; a terrible kind of lethargy, in which a person preserves the sensation of his ills, without the aid of reason to moderate their excesses; and in which transient but alarming dreams afford nothing but sad and frightful images.—The unfortunate Oliver, under this painful suspension of his faculties, continually saw Isambard, Celanira, and Beatrice, pass before him as plaintive shades. He fancied he listened to deep groans, and the accents of a menacing voice.—He started, and frequently a convulsive interruption of his slumbers dissipated these melancholy illusions; but on recovering his faculties, he was again the prey to one oppressive thought; a thought which domineered over every other idea; that of *its being his duty to sacrifice Beatrice to the memory of Celanira!*

At nine o'clock Oliver was at last relieved from this state of anxiety. He heard a knocking at his door; it was Barmecide, who had just arrived at the castle. He informed Oliver he had brought his family with him,

him, and that he had just come from the duchess's apartment, in which he had left Abassa and Mirva. "We are come," added he, "to partake of the glory of the Knights of the Swan and the joy of Beatrice; this charming princess has revived us with the most touching sensibility; I never saw her so amiable, so handsome, and so splendidly clothed. She has just finished dressing, she has shown us the white ribband and the medal of the new order which she this day institutes." "I shall be first decorated with it," said she; "these precious ornaments shall never be laid by, nor should I wear a diadem with so much pride." As Barmecide finished his relation, Mirva suddenly appeared, flew to the embrace of Oliver, and solicited him in the name of the duchess to repair to the drawing-room. Oliver hastened to adjust the disorder of his garments; Isambard and Zemni came in quest of him, and he accompanied them full of tender perplexity. They informed him, that the king of Pannonia would not be present at the festival; without expressing any anger or discontent, he had formed a pretext for absence during the whole day, adding that he should not return till the next morning. The Knights of the Swan entered the drawing-room a moment before the duchess; all the windows were open, the courts, the galleries, and the apartments, were crowded with the people and troops of the princess. At length she appeared. The palace immediately resounded with shouts of joy, acclamation, and applause. Beatrice, who was much affected, stopped in the middle of the drawing-room. Every eye was fixed upon her, and contemplated her with admiration and surprise. A new kind of expression was observable in her face and mien, as brilliant as the dazzling splendor of her beauty. Sweetness of disposition and sentiment was depicted in her looks; but at the same time an air of triumph and delight threw a grace over her whole person, and rendered it more than

than ordinarily striking. She had been usually dressed in white, and with extreme simplicity, ever since the arrival of the Knights of the Swan, and she was now arrayed for the first time in sumptuous clothing. She wore a gold brocade embroidered with pearls and emeralds. The white ribband and the medal of the order of the Swan, formed a graceful contrast to those deep colours, which Beatrice had only chosen to set off to greater advantage the new ornaments which love had rendered so dear to her. She advanced to a window, placed herself in a large balcony which overlooked the courts, and being there in the hearing of the people and soldiers, she read the treaty of peace, and afterwards made a speech to announce the institution of the order of the Knights of the Swan, and the motives which had induced her to found it. When she left off speaking, the people applauded with transport, and at the same instant all the soldiers sung the song of Oliver. Tears of delight trickled down the duchess's cheek. She retired from the window; she perceived Oliver in a corner of the room, and although he used every effort to compose his countenance, she still observed upon it the impression of the same sentiments she herself had felt. Beatrice giving notice she was going to the chapel, called the Knights of the Swan, and leaning upon their arms, immediately left the room. She was accompanied by the other knights and all the ladies of the court. Oliver and Isambard, almost equally distressed, walked on in silence, when, after having passed through two apartments, they started from their reverie, remarking that the duchess was taking a way different from that which led to the chapel. Isambard made an observation upon this, and Beatrice replied with a smile, that she did not mistake her way. She continued to walk on, she stopped at the extremity of the vestibule before the door of the gallery which had been burnt down. A multitude of workmen had been employed
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day and night without intermission in repairing it, but as the doors were always kept shut, no one had seen the inside. The folding door opened on a sudden ; soft and majestic music was now heard, and the duchess entered into the gallery. The decoration of this immense apartment, which was at the same time simple and magnificent, was white and gold. But what was the emotion of the Knights of the Swan, and particularly Oliver, on observing the ceiling of the building covered with trophies, and decorated with their cyphers and devices ? The duchess turned towards Oliver : “ It was nothing but justice,” said she, “ to consecrate this gallery to you : here I saw you walk over the burning beams, and pass through torrents of fire to hasten to my succour ! Here shall the Knights of the Swan be henceforward received ; here in honour of heroism I shall give the emblem and the device which you have illustrated, and which ought for ever to recall the remembrance of every virtue.” Ah madam,” said Oliver with a low and broken voice, “ what new dangers assail me here ? How shall I be able to preserve even a slight vestige of reason ?—He stopped,—and Beatrice, who was equally happy and affected, replied only with a look of inexpressible tenderness. At the end of the gallery they came to the new chapel, which had been erected on the spot where Beatrice’s apartment formerly stood ; the company entered. The duchess took her seat near the altar between Axiana and Abassa, and the ceremony began. The venerable Theobald, standing forward the first, was decorated with the order of the Swan ; Beatrice, who revered her virtuous tutor as a father, observed no ceremony on his account ; she would not suffer him according to the rules of etiquette to kneel before her, and on putting on the ribband of the order, she arose and embraced him. But as for Zemni and the others, she followed the common usages of chivalry, and on presenting the medal, she always repeated the for-

mulary which she consecrated to these receptions, saying to each knight, *Be valiant, beneficent, and generous, like those who first wore this emblem.*

The nuptials of Zemni and Sylvia terminated this interesting ceremony, during which Oliver successively experienced all the delicious and violent emotions, all the passionate and heart-rending sensations, which admiration, constraint, gratitude, and love approved by reason, but combated by duty, could inspire. On leaving the chapel, the company repaired to Axiana's pavilion, in which the duchess intended to dine; this magnificent building was decorated with new ornaments. The front and the pilasters were charged with ingenious inscriptions to the glory of Axiana, celebrating the virtues, and calling to mind the great actions of this illustrious heroine. In fine, while on this day, Beatrice indulged the dearest sentiments of her heart, and immortalized the services, the exploits, and the name of Oliver, she at the same time had availed herself of the opportunity of fulfilling the duties of gratitude and friendship.

When the repast was ended, Oliver, who was too much affected to take any part in the conversation, left the pavilion, and walked into the forest. As soon as he found himself alone, his tears began to flow with bitterness; his mind became bewildered when he considered the sacrifice he had so solemnly vowed to make. He could not bear the idea of destroying the pleasing delusion the duchess lay under, of robbing her of the confidence which her affection and kindness had given her a right to encourage, and of changing her joy into despair. These tender considerations deprived him of all his resolution. In a word; pity, friendship, love, and honour, confounded all his ideas by turns, destroyed all his projects, and tortured his wearied mind by exciting new conflicts and new remorse. Wrapped up in these melancholy thoughts, he wandered in a distracted manner about the forest, when he perceived

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Barmecide, Angilbert, and Lancelot, at two hundred paces distant, and who were advancing to meet him. Not being able to shun them, he joined the company, and Barmecide invited him to walk with them to the column, upon which Beatrice had caused the names of all her defenders to be engraved. At the turn of a road they met a squire belonging to the king of Pannonia, who, on seeing Oliver, asked him whether his brother in arms were in the forest or the castle. Oliver, being surprised at this question, wished, in turn, to know if the squire were charged with any message from his master to Isambard. "Yes, seignior," replied he, "I have a note to deliver to him." "Give it me," returned Oliver; "I can easily guess its contents. Isambard shall receive it in an instant, and I pledge myself in his name, that he will accept what is proposed to him: tell your master I am going to look for Isambard; make therefore no more inquiry after him; in affairs of this kind all eclat should be avoided. Go, and recommend to your master silence and discretion." When the squire was gone, Oliver opened the note, and read, as he expected, a challenge for Isambard. Theudon, in calling him out, named the place, and appointed the time on that very day at an hour before sun-set. Oliver requested the three other knights not to mention this affair to any one. He informed them he meant to conceal it from Isambard, and to fight in his stead; and this would be the more practicable, as being of the same height, and having the same arms, Theudon would be unable to recognise him when his visor was down.—The knights promised secrecy on condition that they were all three present at the combat. They returned to the palace, and Oliver went into the drawing room. His deportment was calm and serene. He informed his friends, that, as Barmecide was going in the afternoon to take his last leave of Gerold, who was setting off for Bavaria, he should accompany him

him part of the way. He promised to be back by supper time, and he now set out with Barmecide. Isambard followed them to the grand flight of steps, and expressed a desire to accompany him. Oliver easily persuaded him he had better stay with the duchess, but on leaving him, he embraced him; a circumstance which was unusual when he left him but for a short time only.—Oliver and Barmecide waited some time on the ramparts for Angilbert and Lancelot, who at length rejoined them. These three friends again repeated their sentiments, which they had already ventured to declare respecting the combat in which Oliver was going to engage. “Consider,” said Barmecide, “that Isambard will certainly be dissatisfied with this generous artifice.” “No,” returned Oliver, “I employ a stratagem it is true, but use no fraud. Are not Isambard’s enemies mine? When I discover them before him, have I not the right of combating the first? Besides, believe me, my friends, that in the present case I act merely equitably; and do not disturb, with useless reflections, the soft tranquillity which I now feel reviving in my soul—in that soul which has been so long the prey of violent agitation!—I know not what happy presumption seems to re-establish its long lost serenity; give me leave to enjoy this pleasing and new state of mind. The three knights, surprised at this discourse, looked at each other with astonishment, and made no more reply. They had never heard the Knight of the Swan speak with so much frankness on his situation; and, in truth, Oliver, without knowing why, no longer felt the necessity, no longer experienced the desire, of dissembling what he felt at the bottom of his heart. At the entrance of the forest, they met their squires, who clad them in their armour; they had only a quarter of a league to go before they reached the appointed spot, and they arrived there in a few minutes. Theudon accompanied by four squires was wait-

waiting for them. Barmecide advancing up to him, informed him, he came with Angilbert and Lancelot only to be spectators of the combat ; and showing him Oliver, he added, *there is the Knight of the Swan ready to receive the token of battle.* The king made no reply, but threw down his glove, which Oliver took up. Then the two foes, after having saluted the seconds, fell upon each other. They fought a considerable time on horse-back without receiving any wounds ; but Oliver's lance was shivered in pieces, and the king's horse fell in consequence of a violent shock which had just taken place. In this shock Theudon's lance fell from his hand ; he cleared himself from his steed and drew his sword. Oliver springing lightly from his horse likewise drew his. At this instant he assailed Theudon with great impetuosity. The latter, surprised and staggered, drew back a few paces. Oliver pressed him closely, dealt his blows upon him, gave him a mortal wound, and overthrew him expiring in the dust. As soon as the generous Oliver saw him fall, his first movement was to give him succour ; he approached him, Theudon held out his hand. Oliver, touched with compassion, threw aside his sword, and stooping down, was going to lift up his vanquished foe ; but the perfidious Theudon, having a dagger concealed in his belt, suddenly drew it, and plunged it into the bosom of Oliver, who cried out as he fell, " thank heaven I have preserved my friend from assassination." —Barmecide and the other knights gave a terrible cry, and rushed towards the Knight of the Swan and his murderer. The latter had already breathed his last : and the unhappy Oliver all bathed in blood seemed to have but a few moments to live. His wound was bound up with handkerchiefs. A litter was made of the branches of trees, upon which he was laid. His distracted friends bore him in this manner to the castle. The squires belonging to the execrable Theudon

don had endeavoured to make their escape the moment the assassination took place, but the squires of the Knights secured their persons, in order to produce still farther testimony of Oliver's victory, and the crime of Theudon. Oliver, however, appearing to recover a little, recommended his friends to go the back way to the palace, in order not to pass before the windows of the duchess's apartment.

They moved slowly forwards, and night had arrived before they reached the castle. On approaching the court in which the pavilion of Oliver stood, they heard music and songs of joy, among which the name of Oliver was a thousand times repeated.—The knights shuddered, and their anguish was increased as they entered the court.—A brilliant illumination displayed the splendour of the brightest day-light; the walls were decorated with garlands of flowers, and laurel wreaths were interwoven with the cyphers of the Knights of the Swan, which were traced upon the fronts of the buildings in characters of fire. An immense multitude of troops and people filled the court, and the French and German soldiers, confounded in the throng with the peasants of the neighbourhood, mixed their warlike songs with the rural strains of the villager, and danced to the united sound of the martial cymbal and rustic bagpipe. The knights, obliged to traverse this court, were aware of the terrible impression the unexpected sight of the dying Oliver must make upon this multitude. And, indeed, scarcely had the crowd cast their eyes on the bloody litter, and the unhappy Knight of the Swan, than the most moving expressions of sorrow succeeded rapidly to the noisy demonstrations of joy. On every side were heard the deepest groans, the most lamentable and piercing cries, and the whole palace re-echoed the doleful sound. Barmecide hastened to send Angilbert and Lancelot in quest of surgeons, and to inform Isambard and the duchess of this tragical event, since it

it was impossible to prepare them for its reception, or to announce it to them by degrees. In the meanwhile, Oliver was carried to his apartment, Barmecide laid him on his couch, and afterwards sat down by his bed-side. Oliver perceiving the expression of consternation and grief upon his countenance, " My dear Barmecide," said he, " you will soon know the inmost secret of my heart ;—then will you no longer lament my approaching end." Barmecide was going to reply ; but the door opened, and Isambard, pale and breathless, appeared, and throwing himself into the arms of Oliver, cried out with faltering accents, " Ah, what hast thou done ?—Ah, cruel friend, and this was for me !" —He could say no more ; his sobs choaked his utterance. At this moment the duchess entered, accompanied by Zemni and the surgeons. Her expressive countenance feelingly announced the dreadful sensations of her heart ; however, she did not weep, she was able to compose her looks, she was mistress of all the resolution of which she stood in need ; being fearful of increasing Oliver's danger by softening him or throwing him into any violent emotion, she requested Isambard in a serious tone of voice, to withdraw a moment from his friend's bed, and calling her surgeons, " their skill," said she, " relieved the count of Bavaria, when his condition was supposed to be mortal ; I flatter myself that the wounds of the generous Oliver are not so dangerous, and that it will be less difficult to restore him to health." After having uttered these words with a considerable degree of firmness, Beatrice left the room, and returned to her apartments ; she did not seclude herself there, but received the visits of the two princesses, Theobald, Roger, Oger the Dane, and the French knights. All these admired and loved Oliver, and their company could not prove troublesome to Beatrice, for she now ceased to act under any constraint in their presence. She felt a kind of consolation in

no longer being under any necessity of disguising her sentiments in favour of Oliver ; she was even desirous, that every one should know that she loved him, that she was beloved again, and that he had refused her hand. Bathed in tears, and afflicted with the keenest anguish, she enjoyed at least the new gratification of laying open her whole soul, of publicly avowing a passion which she had so long dissembled. Although her grief was inexpressible, it was however somewhat moderated by hope ; the unfortunate Beatrice still deluded herself respecting Oliver's condition, and did not consider the immediate danger of it. The surgeons, after having dressed his wound, informed Isambard and his other friends, that they should take off the bandage on the next morning, and that then they should be able to judge of his condition. No one in the castle retired to rest. Isambard, Barmecide, Angilbert, Lancelot, and Zemni, passed the night in Oliver's apartment, and without speaking or communicating their dreadful apprehensions. Isambard's eyes were continually fixed on Oliver—he looked at him with wildness, he watched all his motions with such attention, that upon his countenance was marked all that was expressed upon that of his dying friend. He neither reflected nor thought, but he suffered and languished with him, and like him appeared to grow worse, to decay, and to approach his last moments. At the first dawn of day the four squires of the infamous Theudon were conducted by order of the duchess to the public tribunal, over which Theobald presided. There, in presence of the soldiers and people assembled together, was read with a loud voice the written and attested declaration of the spectators of the combat. This writing established the triumph of Oliver, his generosity, and the assassination committed by Theudon ; the squires of that monster confirmed the truth of these sad particulars, which produced such an effect upon the people,

people, that their indignation and resentment extended even to themselves, although they had not participated in their master's crime, and had even appeared to abhor it. The wisdom of Theobald was able to calm this first movement of rage ; the squires were dismissed, and conducted to the frontiers ; and the name of the dastardly king of Pannonia was erased from the column, which the duchess had erected to the glory of her defenders.

At seven the next morning, Oliyer received a second visit from the surgeons, who came to take off the first dressings from his wounds. Oliver was desirous that all his friends, even Isambard and Zemni, should leave the room ; and he made them promise not to return before he should send for them. The surgeons examined and dressed his wounds without uttering a single word. When they had done, Oliver, looking at them with a kind and tranquil countenance, said : " I feel, that my case is mortal ; but I am deeply interested in knowing, with exactness, how much longer I have yet to live, and you are in justice bound to answer me that question without any kind of evasion." At these words the surgeons seemed confused, and replied in an equivocal manner ; but Oliver urged them so closely, and with such firmness, that they at length declared, that the duration of his life could not exceed that of the day. Oliver heard this sentence without surprise or emotion ; he charged the surgeons to go and inform Barmecide and Lancelot of this, and to beg them, in his name, to communicate it to the princesses, Isambard and Zemni ; " but, recommend to them," added he, " to allow me a few minutes of uninterrupted solitude, which I want to consecrate to religion." The surgeons promised to execute his orders, and went out of the room. Oliver sent for a priest. After having with elevated piety fulfilled all the duties prescribed by religion, he continued to converse for a quarter of an hour with this priest, who now retired to an ad-

jacent chamber. Oliver called for the casket which contained the most precious objects he possessed, the lock of hair and golden chain, those affecting offerings of Celanira, and the scarf of Witikind, which he now took out of the box. "Wretched is the man," said he, "who carries only bloody laurels to his grave!—Henceforth, my glory and renown will belong to those only who have loved me; but this remains, and shall accompany me to the tomb! Yes, that scarf shall be laid upon my breast. It was the reward of a generous action inspired solely by humanity, and on which I now reflect with more delight, than on all the splendid triumphs acquired by arms!" On saying this, Oliver placed the scarf upon his bed. Afterwards he collected his mind, remaining in profound silence, and having summoned all his resolution, he sent word to the duchess and Isambard, that he would be glad to see them.

Lancelot and Barmecide had discharged their melancholy commission; the former was still shut up with the unhappy Isambard and Zemni, while Barmecide was participating, in the duchess's chamber, the grief and terror of Axiana and Abaffa, as they held the hapless Beatrice in their arms, who was struggling in dreadful convulsions, and had just had a fainting fit. At length Barmecide, taking advantage of a moment of apparent calmness arising from the exhausted state of her frame, accosted Beatrice, and mentioned, that Oliver requested to see her. She started; and her tears, which hitherto had been checked, now ran apace down her cheeks; she endeavoured to rise; but sunk down again upon her seat. "Ah, madam," said Barmecide, "consider that Oliver expects you! What will be the bitterness of his last moments if he should see you in this condition!" Beatrice made no reply; but, wiping away her tears, got up, and bearing upon the arm of Barmecide, went out of the room with him. He accompanied her as far

far as the door of Oliver's chamber, and leaving her there, he retired, and she entered alone. Isambard was already in the room, and sitting by the bed-side, his person was half hidden by the curtains ; a glimpse of his pale and torpid countenance was hardly to be seen. The duchess advanced with faltering steps towards the bed, and sunk down into a chair. Oliver had dismissed all his attendants. A moment of silence took place. At last Oliver began to speak. "I again find myself," said he, "between two objects which partake all the affections of my heart.—I wish to make them depositaries of my last thoughts and my last vows."—On uttering these words, he took off the pearl necklace from his arm ; and putting it into the casket which contained Celanira's offerings, "in this solemn moment," continued he, "I may be allowed to unite the gifts of Celanira with the favours of Beatrice.—I am desirous that my tomb, without inscription or ornament, may be placed at the foot of a service-tree, and that these precious tokens be for ever suspended on the branches. I furthermore wish to carry with me to my grave the scarf of Witikind and the portrait of Celanira, let them both be laid in my coffin."—Here Oliver left off speaking, and was answered only by broken and stifled groans.—"I know your generous souls," returned he, "and I am certain that the last desires of your friend will not be forgotten."—"Yes;" cried the duchess, "were it possible Beatrice could exist when Oliver is no more, you would surely be obeyed!"—A flood of tears accompanied these words. Oliver began to be agitated, and he let his head fall back upon the pillow ; the duchess quivered, her tears on a sudden ceased to flow. "Doubt not of my resolution," returned she, in a trembling but earnest tone, "I can force myself to any thing in obedience to you, I can even live if you command it."—"Well," said Oliver, "know then that there is another wish I could venture yet to form, and

and I intreat you both to hear without interrupting me. Cease to afflict yourselves, and to lament my fate ; death alone, O Beatrice, could skreen me from the opprobrium of perjury, or from the dreadful punishment of acting with ingratitude towards you.— Alas, you are acquainted with my crime and my sentiments ; but you could not conceive the excess of my horrour and remorse, and you were quite ignorant of my resolutions.— Yes, I had sworn to fly from you, to leave you for ever.— On this very day it was my intention to depart—to-day I should have taken an eternal farewell ; and would not that have been always dying ? And what kind of death, just heaven ! I should have carried with me your merited reproaches ! I should have abandoned you on my own accord ! — And should have had to support, at the same time, your grief, my own, and the affliction of my friend ! — I shall not now experience the unspeakable torment of tearing myself away from the spot which you inhabit ; but what heart-rending regret still remains in store for me !— O, Beatrice ! O, my brother, it is in your power to remove it ; you can alleviate the dreadful pressure of my remorse.— Alas ! I cannot descend in peace to the grave, but in uniting for ever, in indissoluble ties, the only objects which attach me to life.”—“ Who I !” exclaimed Beatrice, “ when I am already dying ; when I am wasting away, the prey to an invincible passion, which will triumph over me to my latest breath ; can I consent ?— No, Oliver, do not hope for that, no !”— Beatrice pronounced these words with the impetuous accent of indignation and grief, and her sobbing interrupted her utterance.— Isambard, who till this moment had been chilled by despair, and kept profound silence, now suddenly drew aside the curtain, and discovering a wild looking face, which paleness and terror had rendered hardly to be known again, “ Oliver,” said he, “ canst thou venture to conceive the project of forming an union which

which may again attach me to life ? My eyes are fixed upon the grave, I wait only till it opens to receive me, and I solemnly vow—" "Stop," interrupted Oliver, "stop ; I have only another word to say ; if you both persist in your refusal, you will hasten and imbipter my last moments."—At these words Isambard and Beatrice fell upon their knees, and wept abundantly. Oliver took their hands, which he united in his own. "Live," said he, "to honour my memory ; live together, the better to preserve the recollection of your friend. Ah ! it is in the distracted bosom of Isambard that the tears of Beatrice should fall ; and who but Beatrice could share or conceive the regret of Isambard ? Tender and elevated souls, to you I deliver, as a deposit, the sacred flame of love and friendship, that pure and active flame, which will shortly be quenched in my breast. O let it not exhale away with my last breath ! receive it, let it be revived in you, and I shall then not cease to exist. But," continued he, "I feel my strength fail me—complete the gratification of all I wish for, let my last looks enjoy the rapturous sight of so dear an union—I had indulged the idea, that you would yield to the entreaty of your dying friend ; every thing is prepared for the august ceremony. In the name of every feeling which unites us all three together, let us lose no more time."—The unfortunate duchess and the unhappy Isambard were unable to make any reply ; but Oliver, now persuaded of their obedience, gave the appointed signal. At the same instant the door opened, and the priest appeared, who, according to Oliver's directions, was already clad in the sacred vestments of his order, and was accompanied by Theobald, Barmecide, Angilbert, Lancelot, and Zemni, who were to serve as witnesses. All the knights, in deep affliction, advanced forwards in silence, and surrounded Oliver's bed. The priest approached the couch, near which was spread a long and magnificent purple mantle which Oliver had received from Beatrice. He took

took hold of the mantle, and on removing it discovered an altar which he had himself prepared in the morning. Oliver entreated the mournful couple to approach the altar. The duchess pressed one of Oliver's hands within her own : " O thou, whom my heart had chosen for a husband," cried she, " O, yet listen to the voice of Beatrice, permit her to express, for the last time, that invincible sentiment, which neither thy death nor my own can annihilate, since my soul is immortal ! That unhappy passion is going to accompany thee to the grave, to mix with thy ashes, to bury itself for ever, without being extinct.—Thou shalt however be obeyed, thy sacred will shall be executed !—The care of fulfilling it is a duty which still attaches me to life.—O, may peace again possess thy generous soul !—Yes, thy friend, when deprived of a brother, shall find the tenderest of sisters in Beatrice !—And surely I shall discharge my duty, when it is Oliver who calls me to it!"—" Angel of comfort," interrupted Oliver, with transport, " adorable Beatrice, thy celestial voice has soothed my keenest anguish, and chased away my remorse ; yes,—it seems as if thou hadst been restoring me to innocence and virtue."—Oliver pronounced those words with an enthusiasm which revived his spirits ; the paleness of his faded cheeks disappeared, his eyes sparkled with new fire ; and sentiment and serenity were at once expressed upon his countenance. The duchess contemplated him an instant with a kind of ecstasy ; afterwards observing his features change, and the colour of his cheeks fade, she rose abruptly, and, leaning on Theobald, advanced towards the altar.—Oliver laid hold of the scarf of Witikind, which lay near him, and put it round his waist : " O, Celenira," cried he, " I may now be allowed to resume it, I am now worthy to wear it !"—After having uttered these words, Oliver joined his hands, and lifting them towards heaven, he continued in that attitude, with looks affectingly expressive of fervour and contrition.

tion. When the ceremony was over, Isambard hastened to throw himself into the arms of his friend, and the unhappy duchess, who could hardly breathe, and had nearly fainted, slowly approached the bed. Oliver held out his languid hand to her. "O, my sister," said he, "the wife of my friend, your sublime virtue has now expiated all my errors." On finishing those words, his eyes half closed—an universal lamentation was heard throughout the chamber; a doleful cry escaped from the mouth of Isambard—Beatrice shuddered, she endeavoured to lean towards the dying Oliver, and, sinking into the arms of Theobald, fainted away. Oliver sighed, he pronounced with feeble voice the names of Celanira and Beatrice.—Zemni, all bathed in tears, administered unavailing succour!—Isambard held him in his arms, and pressed him to his heart.—On a sudden Oliver half opened his languid eyes, he beheld and recognised his brother.—Faithful friendship received his last look and his last sentiment—"O, my friend," said he.—He then quietly reclined his head upon Isambard's breast, his eyes closed for ever—he expired.

THE END.

NOTES

had been sent to the government only recently. Some
of the men who were sent to him had been captured while fighting
against the rebels. They had been captured because they had
been seen to be carrying arms or had been found to have been
engaged in some military operation. They were held in prison
for a time, and then released without being charged with any
offense. In this way, the rebels were able to get rid of many
of their leaders and to keep them from continuing their
resistance. The government, however, was not satisfied with this
method of dealing with the rebels. It wanted to make sure
that the rebels would not be able to continue their resistance.
So it sent a large force of soldiers to capture the rebels.
The rebels fought bravely, but they were eventually captured.
They were taken to a prison camp where they were held
until they could be tried for their crimes. Some of them
were tried and found guilty, and they were sentenced to
long prison terms. Others were released without being
tried, but they were still held in prison until they could
be tried. This method of dealing with the rebels was
not popular with the people of the country, but it was
the only way to stop the rebels from continuing their
resistance.

CHAPTER II

N O T E S

TO THE

S E C O N D VOLUME.

(1) AS long as Chivalry prevailed, it was a general custom among the knights to make rash and sometimes very extravagant vows ; whether they were shut up in a place to defend it, or making attack upon another ; or whether in presence of the enemy in the field, inviolable and indispensible oaths were taken, obliging both the chiefs, and those whom they commanded, to shed all their blood rather than abandon the interest of the state. Besides these general vows, it was customary to make particular ones, both in the army and elsewhere. Valour gave occasion to many singular enterprises ; such as being the first to place an ensign upon the walls or the highest tower of a city during a siege ; throwing himself in the midst of the enemy, and striking the first blow ; and, in a word, in achieving this or that exploit, giving such and such a proof of boldness, and frequently of temerity. The most valid of all vows was that called the vow of the peacock or the pheasant. The day on which a solemn engagement was to be made, a roasted pheasant or peacock, ornamented with its finest feathers, was carried by the ladies in a gold or silver dish into the midst of the assembly of knights. The bird was presented to each of them, and every knight made his vow thereupon ; and it was then set on a table, to be cut up and distributed among all who were present.

In an ancient poem, called *The Vow of the Heron*, we read of an earl of Salisbury, in England, who, on the moment

moment of his departure to the army, beseeched his mistress, in an assembly, to place a finger of her beautiful hand upon his right eye, so that it might be quite closed. The lady instead of one applied two fingers, and the earl swore upon a heron (upon which other knights had made different vows) not to open that eye till he had entered the French territory, in order to avenge Edward the Third, and had combated Philip in a pitched battle. During the whole war, the earl would not allow himself to see with that eye, and all the army, which was witness to his exploits, likewise bore witness to his fidelity in fulfilling his engagement. Du Guesclin vowed to swallow but three *basons* of wine soup till he had combated a certain Englishman, who had given him a challenge. Laying siege to Montcontour, he vowed neither to eat nor undress himself till the place was taken. Another time he vowed to take no more sustenance after the supper he was going to eat, until he had fallen in with the English, in order to combat them. At the siege of Bressiere, in Poictou, his squire made a vow to erect his master's banner, in the course of the day, upon the tower of that town, to cry out Du Guesclin when he had performed it, and to die rather than fail in the attempt. A few years ago, a singular monument of this custom among the ancient knights was to be seen in France. Near the town of Moutiers, between Riez and Senez, are two majestic hills, which are separated by a space of two hundred and fifty feet. From the summit of one hill to that of the other was extended an iron chain, in the middle of which hung a large star of five points. This was said to be one of the usual vows of the ages of chivalry: it was believed that some knight had sworn to chain two mountains together, and that the star was his device; and it added, that the knight who made this vow was of the family of Blaccas. The town of Moutiers has blazoned its arms from this chain; it bears azure, two hills argent, fastened together by a chain, to which is suspended a chain. These vows were the more inviolable, as they were addressed to God. They had all of them the sanction of religion, and it would have been held equally base and impious not to accomplish

accomplish them : hence history does not afford an example of a knight who ever broke such vows*. Death could alone hinder them from fulfilling so sacred an engagement.

(2) Giaffar the Barmecide, or son of Barmec, was in fact a very great man. He was born in Persia, and became the vizier and favourite of the celebrated Aaron Alraschid. I suppose in my tale, that his family was European, that his name was Barmecide only, and that he did not assume the name of Giaffar till after his misfortunes. It is sufficient to observe here, that Aaron owed all the glory of his reign to the genius and virtues of his minister. Barmecide was adored by the people he governed, and received from public gratitude the fine surname of *generous*.

(3) Aaron Alraschid, the 25th caliph, was son of Mahadi, of the race of the Abassides. His father declared him his successor, in prejudice of his eldest son ; but Aaron, respecting the rights of his brother Hadi Musa, refused the sceptre, and obtained an oath of fidelity in his favour, on the part of all the grandees. The new caliph was insensible of this benefit, and meditated the death of Aaron. But the mother of the ungrateful Musa, whom he had offended, caused him to be assassinated, and Aaron was proclaimed caliph. This prince had great personal endowments, and was celebrated for his liberality, his taste for the fine arts, and his patronage of men of talents. It is said the Arabians invented algebra during his reign. History farther informs us, that when Aaron went to war, he was attended by a hundred men of letters, whose conversation afforded him relaxation under the toils of war. [See the *Encyclopédia*, and the *History of the Arabians*, by the Abbé de Marigni.]

To the honour of our sovereigns, as Mr. Gaillard observes, it should be published, that at this period there subsisted a sincere and personal friendship between two

* Madame de Genlis is mistaken in this. T.

illustrious and heroic monarchs, one in the east, the other in the west; between the caliph Aaron and Charlemagne. These two princes, who never met in their lives, had conceived a mutual friendship for each other, from their respective reputations; a friendship far superior to all attachments arising from political and interested motives. They strove to outdo each other in kindness, even in the smallest concerns; their mutual presents, as to choice, time, or circumstances, were ever marks of esteem and pledges of amity. Many historians assert, that the caliph ceded to Charlemagne, by way of gift, the sovereignty of Jerusalem and the Holy Land, reserving to himself only the title of his lieutenant. Charlemagne and Aaron loved the fine arts, and both of them made verses. Aaron was so sensible to the charms of poetry, that he would frequently weep at the recital of a beautiful composition; nor was he less alive to the charms of music; he composed many of the tunes which at this day are in vogue in the east. Aaron particularly resembled Charlemagne in acts of truth and justice: but is it possible for a conqueror to be always just and true! A woman one day complained to him of having been aggrieved by his soldiers, Aaron observed to her it was written in the Koran, that princes wasted every country through which their armies passed. "Yes," replied the woman, "and I have likewise read there, that the houses of kings are destroyed on account of their injustice." The caliph approved of this hard reply, and immediately redressed her wrongs. Aaron, as well as Charlemagne, was a great alms-giver; he died five years before the latter, in 809, after a reign of twenty-three years, and in the forty-seventh year of his age. [See the *History of Charlemagne.*]

(4) It is known that the first organ which was seen in Europe, was sent to Charlemagne by the caliph Aaron. I have only superadded the origin of that instrument, which is entirely unknown to us.

(5) The

(5) The answer of Barmecide, when the caliph was shutting the door, in order to read a work upon the rights of man, is truly historical. But it is related only that he *was going to read with a sage*, without mention being made of his name, and I have supposed that sage to be Barmecide.

(6) Arichisus, duke of Benevento, and an enemy to Charlemagne, died (as likewise did Romaldus, his eldest son) leaving but one son, named Grimaldo, then in the power of Charlemagne, to whom he had been delivered as a hostage. Charlemagne had (what were then called) well founded rights to the duchy of Benevento, and the Beneventines wished him to rule over them; but Charlemagne restored Grimaldo both his liberty and dominions. He ventured, says his historian, on observing the extent to which the power of injuries was carried in the world, to trust likewise in the power of favours. Grimaldo, touched at the generosity of that prince, endeavoured to render himself worthy of it, and the emperor could not boast of a more faithful subject. He fought against the enemies of Charlemagne, against Adalgise, though his brother-in-law (he had married a sister of the latter), and the Greeks, and with equal ardor and success. After the defeat of Adalgise, history makes no farther mention of him. It was believed that after this he retired to Constantinople, where he lived and died in obscurity.

(7) There was really a king of the name of Theudon, who lived at that period; he was one of the petty monarchs of Pannonia. History represents this prince such as I describe him; he was ambitious, deceitful, hypocritical, but eminent for military talents; he turned christian to please Charlemagne, and afterwards betrayed him. Pannonia was what is now called Hungary and Austria.

Duke Aimon was a relation or ally of Charlemagne, with whom, according to the old chronicles, he had many disputes. His four sons were named Renold, Richard, or Richardet, Alard, and Guichard; the eldest

eldest and most celebrated of whom was the renowned Renold, of Montauban. These four brothers, say the romances, all rode upon one horse, which was called *Bayard*. Bayle says, that Renold, whose name was so famous in romance and poesy, suffered martyrdom, and that the church of St. Renold, at Cologne, was dedicated to him.

(8) Amalberga, who has been canonized, was a young and beautiful lady of the court of Charlemagne. That prince fell in love with her, and the virtue of Amalberga was proof against the suit of the most amiable man, and greatest hero of his time. History tells us, that being one day on the balcony, and perceiving the emperor approaching, she threw herself from it, in order to avoid an interview, which she apprehended might be dangerous, and broke her arm in the fall. She at last retired to a convent, where she ended her days. [See the *History of Charlemagne*.]

(9) The duke of Spolotto, Henry duke of Friuli, Hartrad count of Thuringia, are real personages of those times. The latter was concerned in a great conspiracy against Charlemagne.

Constantine Porphyrogenitus, son of the empress Irene, was to have married Rotruda, one of the daughters of Charlemagne, and the emperor having broken off the marriage, Constantine joined his own resentment to that of Adalgise, but without any success.

(10) The idea of this fabulons plant is not of my own invention; I found it in Bomare's dictionary of natural history. The following is the description given by that naturalist: " *Baaras*, the name of a plant found upon mount Libanus in Syria. Josephus, the historian, says it shines during the night like a small taper; that its light goes out by day; that its leaves, when wrapped up in a handkerchief, get out of it, and quickly disappear: that this plant is beset by demons; that it has the power of changing all metals into gold, for which reason it is called, by the Arabians, the golden herb; that

that it destroys the person who gathers it, if proper precautions be not taken, and these unhappily are not known; that it is nourished by bitumen; that its odour is suffocating, when it is plucked; and that it must be looked for in places planted with cedar trees.”

(11) History informs us that Aaron gave the hand of his sister Abassa to Barmecide on this strange condition, and that he consented to the marriage, in order to see two persons he loved at the same time; and likewise told Barmecide that if the princess was not his sister, he would himself marry her. [See the *History of the Arabians*, by the Abbé de Marigni.]

(12) We learn from history that Barmecide, notwithstanding the watchfulness of the caliph, had a son by Abassa, whom he sent privately to Mecca.

(13) As neither the dead nor the living, nor tyrants even, should be calumniated, in any work whatever; far from having added to the atrocity of this act, I have diminished the horrour of it. The following is the historical fact: The caliph, on discovering the secret commerce of Barmecide and Abassa, ordered the massacre of his grand vizier, and all the Barmecides. Forty persons, it is said, who composed the whole family, were destroyed. The slave, charged with the assassination of the vizier, was much inclined to save him: “I will go,” said he, “to the caliph, and announce thy death: if he ask me no questions, I will return and procure thy escape; but if he ask to see thy head, thou must then submit to the sentence.” The execrable tyrant ordered the head of Barmecide to be brought him, and the slave obeyed. As to the princess Abass., some say she was shut up in a dungeon, where she died with grief; others, that she was only banished from court, and was reduced to the most miserable condition; that many years after, a lady making her a present of five hundred drachmas, it afforded her as much delight as if she had been restored to her former state. Abassa had much wit,

wit, and made good verses. [See the *History of the Arabians*, and the *Dictionary of Illustrious Men.*]

(14) Barmecide was in reality idolized by the nation, and his death occasioned violent and universal sorrow. The caliph perceiving, that there were no bounds to this just regret, published an edict which forbade, under pain of death, the name of Barmecide to be uttered, or any mention to be made of him. An old man braved this prohibition, and at the very gates of the palace recited a copy of verses in the praise of Barmecide. The caliph, surprised at his boldness, ordered him to be brought into his presence; he asked him what could have encouraged such excessive temerity. "Gratitude," replied the old man; "Barmecide was my benefactor." "Well," returned the caliph, "I will henceforth be thy benefactor likewise; substitute my name in the place of Barmecide's." On saying this, he gave him a magnificent cup of pure gold. "O Barmecide," exclaimed the old man, "it is still to thee that I am indebted for this present; even after thy death I receive thy benefactions!—how then shall I be made to forget thee?"

(15) In these ages there really existed a duchess of Cleves, of the name of Beatrice. History informs us, that the neighbouring princes persecuted and besieged her: that she was delivered by a brave French knight, named Trélie, and that she married her benefactor. This knight bore a swan upon his buckler, and the duchess instituted the order of the *Knights of the Swan*. These particulars I have found in the Encyclopedia, under the article of *Knights of the Swan*: and this article it was which furnished me with the idea of my tale, as well as its title. I have since found in another work, written an hundred and fifty years ago, and intitled, *The Imposition of the Devils*, an old fabulous tradition, founded upon the historical trait we have just mentioned. The author of this work, who was physician to the duchess of Cleves, relates, that ancient manuscripts ascribed a miraculous origin to the dukes of Cleves, and thus he relates the tradition: "The sole remaining heir to the duchy was a prin-

a princess ; one day, as she was walking upon the banks of the river, she perceived a beautiful little vessel drawn by a noble swan. The princess remained motionless with surprise ; but her astonishment was doubled when she beheld the vessel making toward the shore, and stopping near the spot where she stood. A young knight came out of the bark, and the vessel disappeared. The knight conducted the princess to her castle. This wonderful stranger received the name of the *Knight of the Swan*, and the princess married him. This pair were perfectly happy for two years ; but at the expiration of that time, the Knight of the Swan fell into a deep melancholy ; and one morning when he was walking on the banks of the river, the vessel and the swan again made their appearance ; the knight stepped on board, and the vessel disappeared for ever." The author, who gives this relation, gravely adds, that *he does not certify the truth of it* ; "but one thing is certain," says he, "that the castle is still full of monuments, which attest the existence of a *Knight of the Swan*. Upon the towers are sculptured representations of that bird, and the old hangings represent the armours of chivalry, bearing a swan as an emblem," &c.

(16) This ancient castle still exists at one of the extremities of the pleasant city of Cleves. I passed through that place a year ago, and visited the habitation of Beatrice ; some parts of the castle have been rebuilt, but most of the ancient apartments and the antique roofs still subsist. I recited upon the spot the description I give in my romance, and therefore it is exact ; but I could not make mention of the charming English garden which has been planted around the castle upon the slope of the mountain, and which is the most agreeable and picturesque I have ever seen of the kind. This delightful habitation was the residence of the governour of the city. I walked for two hours over the gardens, and I felt that it was there I should have written the history of the Knights of the Swan, and the duchess of Cleves. That nothing should be wanting to the agreeableness of this castle, it is situate at the extremity of a

handsome city, in a country remarkable for its fertility, and the beauty of its woods, plantations, and walks.

(17) Beatrice in coming out to meet the knights acted conformably to the customs of her time. We read in Perceforest, says Mr. de Ste. Palaye, of a queen, although just recovered from sickness, setting out to meet a poor but brave and virtuous knight, who came to pay her a visit. Mr. de Ste. Palaye mentions other instances of this kind.

(18) Knights only had the right of wearing rich furs, such as the *vair*, the *ermine*, the *menu-vair*. Other furs of a more common kind were reserved for the squires. Scarlet, and all sorts of red colours were appropriated to the knights, because, says Mr. de Ste. Palaye, of their splendour and excellence. The colour is preserved in the dresses of superior magistrates and doctors. It may besides be observed, that the liberality of the duchefs towards her defenders was so much the more natural, as it was at that time a law of hospitality, and that the knights were always magnificently treated and maintained, and loaded with presents by the princes with whom they sojourned. See in Froissart the particulars of the excessive liberality of the count de Foix to the knights who visited at his court.

(19) It was, as I have already said, the indispensable duty of a knight, to succour all the unfortunate, and to devote himself particularly to the defence of oppressed women. Boucicaut instituted an order of chivalry under the name of the *white lady of the green shield*, in order to force restitution to be made to all ladies whose estates had been taken from them by violence in recent wars. I could cite a multitude of instances of this kind, but wishing to write a note, and not a book on this subject, I confine myself to the relation of a few traits only; the following one is taken from the memoirs of ancient chivalry of Mr. de Ste. Palaye. I have retrenched

trenched some particulars, but what I extract is literally copied.

A faction known under the name of the *Jacquerie*, at first taking its rise in the diocese of Beauvais, soon extended itself to the provinces, and made a league against the order of knighthood, and all the nobility. More than a hundred thousand plebeians and peasants taking arms, resolving to exterminate the nobles, ravaged the country, burned the castles, and put the knights, the squires, and all the gentry to the sword, without sparing even women and children. The better to signalize an inveterate hatred against all the nobility, and as if it were to insult the gentleness and humanity of chivalry, they gave the name of virtue to the most brutal ferocity and barbarous cruelty*. The duchess of Normandy, wife of the regent, the duchess of Orleans, and three hundred ladies, were at Meaux, and not in a state of security: some detachments of these furious wretches, joined by others, sallying forth from Paris and its neighbourhood, thought themselves sure of seizing a prey, which they imagined could not escape them. The inhabitants had opened their gates, and in concert with this factious rabble, had driven the ladies and their attendants to take refuge in the place called the *market of Meaux*; a post divided from the town by the river Marne. The danger was extreme; and there were no excesses which were not to be dreaded from these turbulent bands. The count de Foix, and the capitaine de Buch, who at this time were on their return from Prussia, heard of this fatal news at Châlons. Although they had only sixty lances, that is to say, sixty knights with their ordinary attendants, they instantly determined to go and join the small number of the defenders of the fortress of Meaux. The honour of the ladies did not allow the count de Foix to reflect upon the danger of the enterprise, or the capitaine de Buch to consider that he was an Englishman; he eagerly availed himself of the liberty which the truce be-

* I ought here to repeat, that this passage is faithfully copied. See the edition in 3 vols. printed in the year 1781, vol. 1, page 198, and what follows.

tween France and England afforded him, to gratify a sentiment more powerful in the heart of a knight than national enmity. These two heroes with their little troop repaired to Meaux, and marched against the enemy. The knights cut their way through the hostile ranks, slew seven thousand men, dispersed the rest, and returned in triumph to the ladies, whom they delivered, &c. vol. I, page 199, and what follows.

This generosity towards women was not peculiar to France and England ; it was universal through all Europe, and even in earlier times it prevailed among the least civilized nations. The north was the cradle of chivalry says Mr. Mallet; all the monuments of the ancient Scandinavia evince it ; in these monuments the taste for chivalry, as in its bud, is to be seen ; the history of other nations represents it as unfolding itself and spreading into Spain, France, Italy, and England, with the people of the north who established themselves there. Wherever we open the old histories of the north, we shall read of the feats of knights of equal gallantry and prowess. A Swedish prince had a daughter of rare beauty, named Thora ; she was carried away by violence. Her father published in all the neighbouring states, that he who conquered the ravisher of Thora should obtain her hand, of whatever condition he might be. The youthful Regner delivered the fair captive, and married her. Thora afterwards dying, Regner married a young shepherdess named Aflanga, whom he raised to the throne. *Harold the fine baired*, king of a part of Norway, fell in love with a young girl named Gida, and asked her in marriage ; but she replied, that in order to merit her heart, he must signalize himself by more glorious exploits than he had yet achieved ; and that she should not consider him worthy of her until he had subdued all Norway. Harold swore to take no farther care of his hair till he had completed the conquest of that country, nor did he marry Gida before he had brought the whole kingdom into subjection. These facts, and a thousand others of the kind, appear to be well authenticated ; but (continues Mr. Mallet) it signifies little whether they be true or not ; it is sufficient to give

us an idea of the manners of those times, that these chronicles are written by men well informed in the history and customs of their country. [History of Denmark, by Mr. Mallet *.]

It was by their elevated sentiments and irreproachable conduct, that the women of those days acquired such an empire. The laws of chivalry, says Mr. de Ste. Palaye, which forbade slandering the ladies, obliged them to have particular regard to the decency of their own conduct; and in order to be respected, it was necessary they should first learn to respect themselves. But, if by an opposite conduct they gave cause of just censure, they had always to apprehend some knight at hand, who would call them to an account for their behaviour. The chevalier de la Tour, in some instructions he addresses to his daughters, towards the year 1391, makes mention of a knight of his time, who, passing by castles inhabited by ladies, marked with infamy the abode of those females, who were not worthy to receive *loyal knights pursuing honour and virtue*; and on such as merited public esteem, he lavished his praises. The same writer mentions, that in a grand assembly, *the good knights* placed a lady of inferior condition, but of *good reputation*, above a lady of high rank, because the latter was *blasmée de son honneur*: that is to say, of bad repute.

A man may run into many follies for a worthless woman, but can only achieve great actions for her who is capable of inspiring great sentiments.

(20) I know of no governments purely democratic, but in the smaller cantons of Switzerland; and I know of no places where tyranny exercises a more arbitrary oppressive sway. There, although no sumptuary laws exist; yet, if people appear in public dressed in a better garb than the rude manufactory of the country, they are insulted. There, if a man think fit to embellish his house or garden, or construct a dwelling more remark-

* This history, containing nine volumes, is written with much sagacity; it abounds in curious and interesting inquiries, and gives a clear idea of the history of the northern nations.

ble than those of his neighbours, *the sovereign people* raze or burn his house, and cut down his plantations. There, if a magistrate give offence, the people rise, and seize and hang him without any formality of law ; for *popular justice* is very expeditious. The Landamtmann of Zug was executed in this manner two years before the French revolution, and such examples are very frequent. It is true, that, after the death of this magistrate, the people found out that the unfortunate man was innocent, and they honoured him with *a handsome funeral*. In fine, the almighty people of these small democratic cantons have but one distinct idea, which is, they that are *the strongest* are *the masters*; and they very naturally conclude thence, that their will is the only sacred law, and that every thing should yield to it. The extravagant pride, which this persuasion creates, gives them a sovereign contempt for all strangers ; thus, none can have the honour of being naturalized in these little cantons, or even to purchase an estate there ; and, in no country are strangers so ill treated by the inhabitants. In the public markets, for instance, they are made to pay at least the double of its value for every article ; if their servants dispute the price, they are told, that strangers are not allowed to haggle ; and if they give the money which is asked, without making any difficulty, the other buyers complain, that such prodigality raises the price of things. In such a predicament a stranger is at a loss how to act. While I lament these abuses, I am not the less struck with admiration and respect for a country, the other cantons of which are so praise-worthy on account of their laws, their morals, and the well-informed and virtuous men who govern them,

(21) This Astolphus, the English paladin, is a real personage of the time, of much renown in old chronicles and ancient romances, and likewise the hero of several modern poems.

(22) Queen Eadburga really existed at this period ; I have given her the character which history ascribes to her, and have made no alteration in the facts relating to

to her story. She was the rival of Egbert; the West-Angles abandoned her and repaired to his standard, and she deserved this fate for her vices, the depravity of her manners, and her crimes. Driven out of England, she found an asylum at the court of Charlemagne. One day she observed to that emperor, that her highest ambition was to be queen of France; "Well," replied Charlemagne, by way of joke, "I am a widower, my eldest son is a bachelor; which of the two will you marry?" "The younger," said Eadburga. "Had you chosen me," replied the emperor, "I should have given you my son, but since you prefer him to me, you shall have neither of us." Charlemagne conferred an abbey upon this princess, which she quitted in order to go off with a new paramour. She at length retired to Pavia, where she ended her days in misery.

(23) History affords many examples of that heroism which I ascribe to Bârmecide; a very famous one is to be seen in the Henriade, in the case of Dupleissis Mornay, the most virtuous man on the side of Henry IV.

Mornay revole au prince, il le suit, il l'escorte;
Il pare en lui parlant, plus d'un coup qu'on lui porte;
Mais il ne permet pas à ses stoïques mains,
De se souiller du sang des malheureux humains.
De son roi feulement son ame est occupée;
Pour sa défense seule il a tiré l'épée;
Et son rare courage, ennemi des combats,
Sait affronter la mort, et ne la donne pas;

HENRIADE, Book VIII.

Il marche en philosophe, où l'honneur le conduit,
Condamne les combats, plaint son maître, et le suit.

HENRIADE, Book VI.

(24) The old chronicles say, that, in the days of Oger, there was a giant of the name of Bruhier, whom Oger at last combated and slew. Besides, a giant is no fabulous being, when described as eight or nine feet high only, which is certainly a size gigantic enough in all.

all reason. Every one knows, that the late king of Prussia had a giant among his guards eight feet, six inches, eight lines high, French measure (See Bomare's Dictionary, article giant). Thus we may reasonably suppose, that such a stature is not the utmost effort of nature in this kind of production.

(25) In this work I have been able to give but a very imperfect representation of these interesting associations : the history of France must be consulted for the particulars of them. Imagination cannot embellish them : they are of themselves sufficient to render for ever respectable the institution of ancient chivalry. In the history of Guesclin, Clisson, Sancerre, the valiant Boucicaut, Basfompierre, and many other French heroes, will be found the true models and admirable examples of that pure and elevated friendship, which in the present day is only a chimera. In fine, it is in the history of these remote ages, that we shall see the enthusiasm of friendship add to the enthusiasm of glory and virtue, and triumph even over that of love itself. I shall here only copy the detail of the ceremonies mentioned by Mr. de St. Palaye. The brotherhoods of arms, says he, are formed in various manners. Sometimes, though rarely, the knights are bled together, and then mix their blood. Most commonly the companions in arms make their vows with all the sacred ceremony of religion ; they kiss together the bread presented to the faithful at the celebration of mass ; sometimes they receive the sacrament at the same moment ; frequently they make a mutual exchange of arms. From this instant they wear the same kind of clothes and armour. They are desirous the enemy should be mistaken as to their persons, and wish to share equal dangers. The union of the brothers in arms was so intimate, that it did not allow of acknowledging any friends who would not be friends to both. The brother in arms of Boucicaut thought it his duty to refuse a very considerable sum of money from Henry de Trans-tamere, for no other reason than because this prince was the enemy of Boucicaut. The oath of the brother in arms was never to abandon his companion, into what-ever

ever danger he might fall, to aid him with his counsel, with his body, and his possessions, until death, and to answer all challenges for him, should he die before he himself could accept them. The brother in arms was to be the enemy of his companion's enemies, the friend of his friends. Both were obliged to divide their present and future fortune, and to employ all their wealth, and devote their lives to the deliverance of each other when taken prisoner.

(26) Duels were very frequent in battles and sieges, and the common motive of the combatants was the glory of their ladies. It would hardly be believed, says Mr. de St. Palaye, were it not supported by the authority of history, that the besieged and besiegers would cease fighting in the heat of a battle, to leave the field open to a party of squires desirous of immortalizing the beauty of their ladies by combating for them. This is nevertheless what was seen at the siege of the castle of Touri en Beauce, and a multitude of similar instances may be cited. This spirit of gallantry had not evaporated in the wars of Henry IV. and Lewis XIV.; and it was a common thing for a man to fire a pistol for the love or honour of his lady. At the siege of a certain place, an officer, who was mortally wounded, wrote his mistress's name upon a gabion as he was struggling in the pangs of death.

(27) In the challenge which was proposed at the siege of Arras, in the year of 1414, between four Frenchmen, the chief of whom was the bastard of Bourbon, a young lad, and four Burgundians, whose chief was the chevalier Cotte-brune, the latter furnished himself with long and thick lances; but when he saw he had to do with a stripling, *il trouva manière d'avoir lances gracienses, desquelles il feist ses armes a l'encontre du batard de Bourbon fi gracieusement, que nul ne fut blessé.*

(28) Of all the recompenses which chivalry held out, says Mr. de St. Palaye, the most glorious was certainly the prize of valour, awarded by the judgment of those

who themselves had a right to pretend to it. Thus Joinville imagined he could not better finish the eulogium of Henry de Cône, his uncle, who died of the wounds he had received in an action against the Turks, than in adding these words ; “ and I heard him say on his death-bed, that he had been in his time in thirty-six battles and engagements, in which he had several times borne away the prize of arms.” Besides the prize awarded to the bravest knight of the day, it was the custom sometimes, after a battle or assault, to present other warriors who had signalized themselves with chains of gold. In aftertimes an allegorical meaning was given to this present ; it was intended to signify to those who received it, that their valour wanted nothing but to be chained. *By God's easier*, said Lewis XI. to the brave Raoul de Lannoy, as he presented him with a gold chain worth five hundred crowns, *By God's easier, my friend, you are too furious in combat, you must be chained, for I will not lose you, being desirous of making up of you again.* The English likewise conferred great honours upon those who had surpassed their fellow combatants in an action.

(29) At the siege of Calais, Edward III combated with Eustace de Ribaumont, *a hardy and puissant knight, who twice brought him upon his knees.* The monarch still recovered himself, and at last forced this formidable enemy to deliver up his sword and become his prisoner. Edward III had the generosity to crown this knight, who had treated him so roughly. Having gained the battle, he gave a supper to the French prisoners, after having clothed them with new and magnificent mantles like the English knights. “ After supper, he came,” says Froissard, “ to mezzire Eustace and Ribaumont. ‘ Of all the knights in the world,’ said he, ‘ I never saw one more valiantly attack his enemies, or defend himself ; and I never found myself in a battle, where I met with one who put me to it so hardly hand to hand, as you have done this day : therefore of right I adjudge to you the prize, before all the knights of my court.’ Then the king took the chaplet, which he wore on his head,

and

and which was enriched with valuable pearls, and, putting it on the head of monsieur Eustace, said : ‘ Monsieur Eustace, I present you with this chaplet, as the ablest combatant of this day, both of those within and those without the walls ; and I pray, that you will wear it a year for my sake. I know, that you are of a gay amorous disposition, and that you willingly frequent the company of the ladies ; say, therefore, wherever you go, that I gave it you. You are also no longer a prisoner, and are at liberty to depart to-morrow, if you please.’

It is well known what honours the prince of Wales rendered to John king of Bohemia, his prisoner, after the battle of Poitiers ; with what marks of respect and veneration he continually refused to sit down at table with that monarch, and what splendid encomiums he paid to his valour. The historians of France and England are filled with instances of this nature. May that of the end of the present century again renew these touching examples of generosity.

(30) We read in the memoirs of ancient chivalry, that the ladies and princesses went to visit the wounded knights ; that the young damsels learnt the art of healing wounds and dressing them ; an office in which they were frequently employed.

(31) The author of *Philomena*, or *Philumena*, a work of the greatest value on account of its antiquity*, says, that Balahac, who had caused himself to be crowned king of Carcassone, perished at the siege of that city, and left a widow, a woman of great courage, whose name I may be allowed to change, as from the signification it has since received, it would not exhibit an agreeable idea at the present day, of the heroine of a romance ; for she was named *Carcas*, or *Carcasse*. The representation of her, says Mr. Gaillard, is still to be seen over the gate of the city, with this inscription,

* This is an historical romance. It is conjectured, that the name of *Philomena* is that of a secretary, historian, or chronicler, either real or supposed, of Charlemagne.

Carcas sum; the corruption of which has doubtlessly given the name to the place. The widow of Balahac undertook to avenge her husband, and sustained the siege with so much glory, that Charlemagne left her in possession of the sovereignty and jurisdiction of the city. The Saracens came and insulted the Countess of Carcassone under her own walls, jesting at the idea of a female warrior, and recommending to her the care of her spinning. She armed herself with a large distaff, which was a formidable lance; she fixed a great skein of hemp to it, leaving only the point of the lance free and uncovered. She set fire to the hemp, and in this manner rushed into the midst of the Saracens, whom she filled with terror, and put to flight. In the city of Carcassone are yet shewn her shield, and her distaff, or victorious lance. Her county of Carcassone, joined to her personal glory, induced the handsomest, youngest, and bravest knights of her time to solicit her hand. The fortunate suitor was a French knight of the name of Roger, a branch of a long race of counts of Carcassone, of whom the greater part were so named.

See the History of Charlemagne, by Mr. Gaillard.

(32) We know that in those times, and even down to the last century, the efficacy of philters, talismans, &c. was believed. Mahomet the impostor, the famous Walstein, and many others, took philters which poisoned them, though they were only administered with the design of rendering them amorous. History informs us, that Lucretius the poet swallowed a philter, the violence of which affected his reason for a long while. The romance writers relate, that Charlemagne, being already advanced in years, had a mistress, who was neither young nor handsome, but whom he loved to distraction. She died. Charlemagne ordered a magnificent coffin to be made for her, covered at the top with glass, through which the deplorable object it contained could be seen. He passed whole days in contemplating this spectacle: at length he shewed such extravagant marks of grief, that archbishop Turpin suspected that so singular an attachment must arise from some supernatural cause. He examined

examined the corpse of the deceased, and perceived that on her left finger was a ring, upon which were engraved certain characters, which he considered as magic : he took off the ring, and put it on his own finger, and appeared before the emperor. He was received by him with a degree of kindness which hitherto all the goodness of the emperor towards him had not exhibited. He was pestered with demonstrations of friendship which exceeded all bounds. There was nothing that Charlemagne would not do for him, and in an instant too. At one time he was going to make conquest of the empire of the east, and confer it upon him, that Turpin might at least become his equal ; at another time he was going to make him pope, in order that Turpin should be his spiritual superior. The vivacity of his transports, the impetuosity of his tenderness, confirmed the archbishop in his opinion. He was too religious to be capable of taking any advantage of a magical operation ; he was only desirous of uncharming the monarch. In order, therefore, to prevent this dangerous ring from ever falling into hands which might make an improper use of it, like its first possessor, he threw it into a pond in the neighbourhood of the spot where Aix la Chapelle was afterwards built. Then it was with the pond that Charlemagne fell in love. On its banks he caused a palace, a temple, and a city, which he made the capital of his empire, to be built. This abode he preferred to the whole universe ; and here he was determined to live and die *. I have read many curious works upon philters and talismans, written in the beginning of the last century, the authors of which, although men of erudition, treated the subject with the greatest gravity, and had no idea that the reader could have any doubt of a multitude of facts, which are quoted in every page. Considering, therefore, the general prevalency of such opinions, my little page will not be accused of excessive credulity. Besides, he is only fifteen years old, and in love. What inducements to implicit belief !

See the Life of Charlemagne.

(33) Abder-

(33) Abderahma I, surnamed (though very improperly) the just, was the grandson of the caliph Hachem, of the race of the Omniades. After the ruin of his family, he was called into Spain by the Saracens, who had revolted against their king. The latter was defeated in combat by Abderahma, who assumed the title of king of Cordova. He made the conquest of Castile, Arragon, Navarre, and Portugal. He protected the arts, enlightened and embellished Spain. He it was who built the famous mosque of Cordova, which subsists to this day. He had many shining qualities, but yet was not a great king, for he oppressed his subjects, who, under his reign, were excessively burdened with taxes. He died in the year 789 or 790. Bermudus I, whom I make the father of Axiana, abdicated the government in the year 791, so that the conquest of Cordova by Abderahma was made before the death of Bermudus; but I have already said, that I should not always confine myself to chronological precision.

The founder of Cordova must not be confounded with another Abderahma, who lived a little before him; he was governor of Spain under the reign of Hachem, caliph of the Saracens, and was slain in battle as he was fighting against Charles Martel in 732.

(34) Justice, moderation, and generosity, form the true basis of sound policy. This sublime policy was practised by Lewis IX. whose very enemies chose him for arbiter. Sully acted agreeably to the same principles (see his memoirs); and truly in those tempestuous times, a minister of the character of Mazarine would not have settled the distracted affairs of Henry IV. I have studied history very much, and I should infinitely regret having given up so considerable a portion of my time to reading, which in general is dry and fatiguing, had I not drawn this conclusion from it, *That in every thing the most equitable and virtuous resolve is the most useful and the best.* Certain statesmen of the present age most assuredly will not approve of the policy of the Knights of the Swan and Beatrice. I could quote examples of still greater generosity from history, the utility of which has

has been established by its success ; and if, on the contrary, I should enter into the detail of the evils and inconveniences which have resulted from the want of justice and moderation, I should undertake a voluminous history. I shall confine myself to the citation of one single instance of this nature, with which Mr. Gaillard, the excellent historian I have so often quoted, furnishes me, and whose judicious reflections I shall likewise subjoin.

During the captivity of Francis I. at Madrid, Charles V. deliberated in council upon the treaty he should make with that Prince. The bishop of Osma, the emperor's confessor, was of opinion, that the French king should be treated with a generosity which might secure his gratitude and friendship. He therefore proposed to extort no harsh conditions, but at once to give him his liberty. The duke of Alba rejected this advice as pious and chimerical, and he brought the council to his way of thinking. At the same time the famous Erasmus mentioned in his writings such generous procedure as the sole means of securing a lasting peace. This, said the ministers of Charles V. in a disdainful manner, is the idea of a wit, very fine in morals, and upon paper, but good for nothing in politics. It is known that Francis I. protested against every thing he had signed in Spain. Two centuries of war, the consequence of the rigour of the treaty of Madrid, and the inexecution that necessarily followed such hard conditions, have however proved, that it was the advice of the confessor and the wit, that ought to have been preferred and adopted.

TRANSLATIONS

OF THE

ITALIAN AND FRENCH MOTTOES.

VOLUME SECOND.

CHAPTER I.

Is there a soul so stubborn as not to feel reverential emotions, on considering the gloomy spaciousness of our churches, and hearing the devotion-inspiring tones of our organs?

CHAPTER II.

A tyrant's friendship is a chain of slavery.

CHAPTER IV.

1. His hate is ever greater than his love.
2. At court, the services of many years
Are in a moment cancelled and forgot.
There, favour, always sought too eagerly,
Is often but a snare to cover death.

CHAPTER V.

1. What charms in beauty, when adorn'd with virtue!

CHAPTER VI.

Not always best, the counsel of the many.

CHAPTER VII.

1. That cruel art which teaches to presage
Future misfortune, is not surely wisdom:

'Tis

'Tis folly.—When the timid, credulous mind
 Paints to itself supposed impending ills,
 The image always is beyond the truth.
 Why, then, should foolish man himself torment
 With vain anxiety, and realize
 Evils, which, at the most, are only doubtful?

2. Mysterious doings cover dark designs.

CHAPTER VIII.

1. All power is derived from God : and whatsoever
 is derived from God, is established only for the advan-
 tage of mankind. The great would be useless upon the
 earth, if there were none poor and unfortunate : their
 elevation they owe to the public needs : and so far are
 the people from being made for them, that they them-
 selves are entirely made for the people.

2. So strong is popular prejudice in favour of the
 great, that if these would but think of being good, it
 would amount to idolatry.

CHAPTER IX.

The Briton, independent, brave and bold,
 Was never yet a slave to court caprice * :
 He never regulates his love or hate
 By kingly favour : no such prejudice
 Has any influence on his actions—He,
 To save his country would o'erturn a throne !

CHAPTER X.

The heart has secrets to the mind unknown.

CHAPTER XI.

1. Love ill conceals itself.
 2. The words we hear, the visage fair we see :
 But who can tell what passes in the heart?

CHAPTER XII.

1. Contempt follows Love inspired by coquetry.

* Did Mr. De la Harpe know us sufficiently ? or are we changed
 since he wrote ?

2. 'Tis

2. 'Tis the providence of love, that coquettes should meet inconstant lovers.
3. 'Tis virtue only proves a constant love.

CHAPTER XIII.

1. O times! O happy times! when the red forge Burn'd only to produce the sock and sickle.
2. Ev'n in its prudence love is indiscreet.

CHAPTER XIV.

1. The whitest skin must yield to whiter paint; As lovely nature dazzles less than art.
2. Age of the passions! bold, but blind-fold youth! Ah! whither lead'st thou the impassion'd heart?

CHAPTER XV.

1. Love, though defied, will venge himself at length.
2. The man who sswears to love eternally; And he who sswears never to love at all, Appear, to me, to be of equal rashness.

CHAPTER XVI.

There wanted only speech—or, rather, speech
There wanted not—if one could trust the eyes.

CHAPTER XVII.

2. Behold! how beauteous and how blest I am;
And lose thy grief in my felicity.

CHAPTER XVIII.

O ye, who wish, malignly, to obscure
The glory of the sex, say, have ye e'er,
Among your heroes, virtue more sublime?

CHAPTER XIX.

1. Where'er he be, were it at the world's end,
I'll fly to find him: Love will lend me wings.
2. Have seas, or storms, or exile daunted me?

CHAPTER XX.

Prudence is ever needful to the wicked.

CHAPTER XXII.

The moment of danger's the moment of love.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Sweet cup, empoison'd with the dregs of horrour !
Dear, fatal object of both joy and grief !

CHAPTER XXIV.

Monster ! that o'er my unsuspecting heart
Hast held such empire, with such deep deceit :
I ask not Heav'n to blast thee, in its ire,
With sudden death, and dread-inspiring pain.
No, no ; more lasting punishments are due
To divine justice.—May it pay thy crimes
With lasting infamy, stamp on thy face
Thy worthless character in traits so deep
That all may see it,—as 'tis seen by me !

CHAPTER XXV.

One is rarely great at the summit of greatness.

CHAPTER XXVI.

1. How hard the heart of him, who is not touch'd
By sweet and interesting infancy ?
2. All the emotions of that tender age,
Which has not been corrupted, tend to virtue.

CHAPTER XXVII.

Men, or devils ! whosoever ye be, dare ye justify
these attempts against my independence by *the right*
of the strongest?—Proud and disdainful being, who
disownest thy brother ! canst thou not see that this
contempt rebounds upon thyself ? Wouldest thou enno-
ble thy pride ? Have dignity enough to place it in thy
necessary relations with the wretches whom thou de-
basest. One common father, an immortal soul, future
happiness—such is thy real glory, such is also theirs !

CHAPTER

CHAPTER XXVIII.

1. I love my love enough—to leave him!
2. The pray'rs inspired by confidence in God
Ascend on high, and reach his holy throne ;
Just as the flame, by nature, soars to heav'n.

CHAPTER XXIX.

My lord ! Make ev'ry thing a sacrifice
To blissful peace —In vain the laurel twines
About the victor's brow, if blissful peace
Be not the fruit.—Let peace attend his car
Of triumph—if he mean to merit glory.

CHAPTER XXX.

Celestial friendship ! Perfect happiness !
Sole passion, that or knows not, or admits
Excess—Dear idol of the upright heart !
Be this last chapter sacred to thy name.

F I N I S